

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

**DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln**

---

Communication Studies Theses, Dissertations, and  
Student Research

Communication Studies, Department of

---

8-2014

# THE RHETORIC OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: NGOS' DISCOURSES AND DELIBERATIVE PRACTICES WITH COMMUNITIES IN ETHIOPIA

Getachew Dinku Godana

*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*, [getdinku958@gmail.com](mailto:getdinku958@gmail.com)

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/commstuddiss>

---

Godana, Getachew Dinku, "THE RHETORIC OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: NGOS' DISCOURSES AND DELIBERATIVE PRACTICES WITH COMMUNITIES IN ETHIOPIA" (2014). *Communication Studies Theses, Dissertations, and Student Research*. 30.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/commstuddiss/30>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Communication Studies, Department of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Communication Studies Theses, Dissertations, and Student Research by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

THE RHETORIC OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: NGOS' DISCOURSES AND  
DELIBERATIVE PRACTICES WITH COMMUNITIES IN ETHIOPIA

by

Getachew Dinku Godana

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of  
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska  
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements  
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Communication Studies

Under the Supervision of Professor Ronald Lee

Lincoln, Nebraska

August, 2014

# THE RHETORIC OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: NGOS' DISCOURSES AND DELIBERATIVE PRACTICES WITH COMMUNITIES IN ETHIOPIA

Getachew Dinku Godana, Ph.D

University of Nebraska, 2014

Adviser: Ronald Emery Lee

This dissertation interrogates “community participation” as an international, national, and local discourse and diagnoses the consequences of this discourse for the people living in rural Ethiopia. The analysis proceeds in two steps. First, I critically investigate “community participation” discourses of two purposely selected intergovernmental donors (the UN and the World Bank) and two international NGOs working in Ethiopia, namely Oxfam Great Britain and World Vision. Second, I study grassroots interactions between NGO staffs and the Ethiopian communities they serve. I conducted in-depth interviews with sixty-four members of communities, NGO staff and government officials to understand their experiences and local practices of public deliberation. Additionally, I observed nine NGO-community joint meetings on development issues.

Findings of the study suggest different parties have different reasons for embracing "community participation." Adopting a postcolonial lens and employing ideographic criticism helped me illuminate how the rhetoric of "community participation" warrants Western organizations to do development in ways that advance their interests

while still appearing to promote grassroots democracy. Findings of the study suggest that the communities I studied appear to be the least influential group, denied a real chance of discussing their own situations and influencing decisions. The results are discussed in terms of practical implications for dealing with multiple stakeholders and conducting grassroots deliberations that empower participants and seek collaborative solutions for development challenges. The study also has theoretical implications for communication-based theorization of participation, voice, empowerment and grassroots democracy.

Copyright 2014, Getachew Dinku Godana

## **DEDICATION**

To my loving and incredibly supportive wife Elleni Melles. I could not have done it without your unconditional support, care and prayers for me. You have sacrificed a lot to support my study and provide for us.

In memory of my mother Wosene Tsegaye. You taught me to never give up and keep going even when the going gets tougher.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Over the years I have come to realize more and more that I pursued this study not as a result of my individual genius but because God helped me and provided me with a team of amazing people. I could not have done this dissertation alone. Along the way, a number of people have given me support, advice and encouragement. I recognize a few of the many professors, friends, colleagues and family members.

I heartily thank my advisor and mentor, Dr. Ronald E. Lee, for loving this project; being completely invested in it, and guiding me through the entire process patiently and cleverly. I am grateful for the enormous insight, attention, time and emotional support he gave me. He always read my chapters incredibly fast and got back to me with wonderful edits and very clear, detailed feedback. He has been here for me by always encouraging me to “keep the faith” when I struggled. He never gave up on me in spite of the tough times I had to go through. He went out of his way to help me grow and become the person and scholar I am today. He is kind and understanding beyond what words could describe. Not only did Ron introduce me to the beauty and richness of rhetorical criticism, but he also showed me how a person can balance the highest degree of scholarship with empathy and care for human beings. I could not have asked for a better mentor and advisor.

I liked our meetings in the coffee shops off campus because I got 100% of him. He made me feel special and comfortable to share with him my challenges, frustrations and plans without any reservation. Our terrific conversations always ended either when I ran out of questions or got enough inspiration to go and write. He even did not mind

getting a ticket for not putting additional money in the parking meter. No matter how early I arrived, I always found him there, reading my manuscript. On a July Fourth day, he was there sitting on the steps in front of the shop waiting for me because the coffee shop was closed. It is not easy for a person of his stature to ask his friends to donate money for his own student's research project. He didn't mind going out of his way to get funding for my dissertation project.

I am also indebted to the other members of my dissertation committee. I have always been impressed with Dr. Damien Pfister's incredible talent in teaching and mentoring. Personally, I got a lot of support from him. He helped me get my feet wet in the world of academic publication and created work opportunities for me. I am very grateful to Damien for his confidence in me. I thank Dr. Kathleen Krone for shaping my views in the areas of grassroots organizing and "meeting globalization from below." Her classes helped me to conceive the idea of this dissertation project. I thank my external committee member, Dr. Patrice McMahon, for the support from my first year in the department of Political Science till now. Her insightful comments challenged me to think outside the box of my major field of study.

I gratefully acknowledge the funding sources that made this dissertation project possible. Bob Haag, Dan Blankenau and Laura Schumacher generously helped fund my research trip to Ethiopia. I would not have stayed in the field that long and put together the dataset without their support.

I am humbled by the huge support I received from other professors and colleagues in the Department of Communication Studies at UNL. Our chair, Dr. Dawn Braithwaite has been my consistent supporter ever since I first met with her. I am indebted to her for



the opportunity to study and work with the community I like and respect. She strikes a balance between demanding intellectual excellence and supporting individuals with their needs. It was very kind and thoughtful of Dawn to financially support my field study trip to Ethiopia.

Everybody else in the department has been welcoming and always ready to help. I would like to recognize a few people in particular. My first friends in the department, Travis Bartosh and Arleen Bajerano, helped me a lot to adjust well and carry out my teaching responsibilities. They have a special place in my heart. I shared an office with Sara Baker for four years. She has been a special friend to me and my family. Sara has taught me how to live a better life by crossing intercultural and intergroup boundaries. As I often like to say, “Sara not only teaches intercultural communication, but also lives it.” She has taught me from the simple things as to how many times I would say “bless you” to somebody who sneezes to complex ideas as non-othering approaches to making relationships. I think international students need to get the kind of support Sara gave me. Joshua Ewalt, Scott Church, and Jessy Ohl have been my other friends in Nebraska. I thank every one of them for the support and friendship. Uplifting conversations with Jessy, the constant attention I got from him and his tap on my back meant a lot to me. Josh sometimes scared me with the depth of his scholarship, but he challenged me to think better. Every one of the graduate students in the 2009 cohort (Adam Knowlton, Rachel Stohr, Sara Baker, Sarah Jones and Zantel Nichols) has been very friendly, supportive and engaging. Thanks to Chigozirim Utah, Raymond Blanton and his wife, Hope, for their friendship, encouragements and thoughts.

I want to thank Dr. Will Norton for bringing me to the United States and his support during my first year. Thanks also to special friends of my family Don and Kathy Cooks for unwavering, all-rounded support. We have seen Don and Kathy make huge difference in the lives of many international students. The world needs more selfless people like them. Don and Dr. Shirley White have read chapters of my dissertation and provided very helpful ideas. I'm touched by Scott and Deena Winter's unconditional love and support to my family, from day one to now. A good part of our household stuff comes from the Winters. I owe a lot to the Ethiopian community in Lincoln. I have received special support from my Bible study group. My pastor and friend Abreham Getachew and his wife Jalele Defa have supported my family in so many ways.

I am very grateful to my long-time friends Bekako Duguma, Fasil Abate and Abebe Negatu for helping me out during my field study. Without their support, I could hardly get the cooperation I got from Oxfam, World Vision and the communities I studied. I thank Neema Guluma, Lakew Alemayehu and many other field staff members of the NGOs for facilitating my study and sharing ideas with me. I am thankful to my family in Ethiopia who helped me a lot during the data collection and throughout the study. My sister Helina Dinku and her friend, Hiwust Ashenafi, did a great job transcribing the interviews. I also thank the participants in this study for taking the time to share their experiences with me.

Above all, I would like to express my gratitude to my wife, Elleni Teklu and our daughters Lidiya and Biruh Getachew. Ellu, you have sacrificed your successful accounting profession in Ethiopian and worked very hard to provide for our family and help me focus on my studies. You always believed that I could do it and tried to help me

lift up my spirit. You never complained about life. You taught me to stop worrying about tomorrow and try to enjoy life today. Lidu and Buti, you have no idea how much your prayer and massages helped me feel better and get back to writing. I know this project has taken your dad's attention off of you. You always wanted to know, "How many more pages to write?" It is now over. Thank you so much for your understanding and patience with me

## Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....	1
The Rhetoric of "Community Participation" as an Area of Inquiry .....	5
"Community Participation" as a Communication Problematic .....	9
Significance of the Study .....	11
Theoretical and Practical Contributions.....	13
Reading "Community Participation" Discourses through a Postcolonial Lens .....	14
The Rhetorical Space in Ethiopia .....	19
Outline of the Study .....	22
CHAPTER 2 : CONTEXT TO THE RHETORIC OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION .....	23
Theoretical Foundations of Participation Discourses .....	23
Participation: Meaning, Rhetoric and Reality.....	31
The Link between NGOs' Discourses and Approaches to Development.....	37
Research Questions .....	41
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN .....	42
Rhetorical Criticism.....	46
Ideographic Criticism.....	51
Rhetorical Field Methods.....	52
Participant Observation.....	55
In-depth Interviews .....	58
Procedures for the Analysis of Ideographs .....	59
CHAPTER 4: <COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION> AS AN IDOGRAPH .....	62
Dominant Ideologies in "the Era of International Development" .....	65
Global Agencies' Rhetoric of <Community Participation> in <Development>.....	71
<Community participation> Rhetoric of the United Nations.....	74
<Community Participation> Rhetoric of the World Bank .....	80
Promotion of democratic rights.....	83
Beneficiary <empowerment> and <capacity building> .....	85
<Effective>, <sustainable> and <efficient> development .....	86
NGOs' Rhetoric of <Community Participation> .....	87
Oxfam's <Community Participation> Rhetoric .....	89

World Vision's Rhetoric of <Community Participation> .....	95
Expertise vs. Participation Tensions: A Clash of Rationalities .....	99
Ethiopian Government's Rhetoric of <Community Participation>.....	104
<Community Participation> Versus <Public Participation> .....	106
<Public Participation> Versus Forced Contributions .....	109
<Development> Versus <Democracy>.....	111
CHAPTER 5: TENSIONS IN GRASSROOTS PUBLIC DELIBERATIONS: LESSONS FROM FIELD OBSERVATIONS .....	114
NGOs' Engagement in the Study Sites and the Communities .....	115
Oxfam GB Engagement in the Study Area.....	115
World Vision Engagement in the Study Area.....	115
The Research Communities .....	117
Presentation and Analysis of Field Observation Data .....	120
Theory of Communicative Action and the Ideal Speech Situation.....	121
Case 1: Oxfam-Community Meeting.....	128
Scene-agency ratio .....	129
Agent-agency ratio .....	131
Agent-act ratio.....	133
Agency-act ratio .....	135
Case 2: World Vision-Community Meeting .....	138
Scene-agency ratio .....	142
Agent-agency ratio .....	143
Agent-act ratio.....	144
Agency-act ratio .....	146
Pentad: Wider Societal Circumference .....	149
Agent-agency ratio .....	150
Agent-act ratio.....	151
CHAPTER 6: ETHIOPIAN'S PERCEPTIONS OF PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT .....	155
Community Voices: “NGOs are here to help us” .....	157
Conceptualizing Participation .....	160
Free Spaces for Public Deliberations? .....	165

NGO Staff Members' Voices: "We are Empowering Communities" .....	169
Discursive Construction of "Community" .....	173
Is Community Participation being "Adulterated?" .....	176
Swearing by "Community Participation" .....	181
NGO Workers' Description of Community Participation Practices in Ethiopia.....	185
Donors and the Local Government: Partners and Challenges .....	194
Free Deliberative Spaces for NGOs to Engage Communities? .....	199
The Voices of Ethiopian Government Officials and Experts .....	203
Expertise versus Indigenous Knowledge: Integration and Tensions .....	206
Summary .....	217
CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	219
Project Summary.....	219
Interpretations of Major Findings .....	222
<Community participation>: The beloved ideograph.....	222
Cultural imperialism?.....	223
The homogenization and routinization of "participation" .....	224
Discursive <community>.....	226
<Community participation> as contested ground .....	228
Tensions between < expertise> and <community participation> .....	230
Despite good intentions: <Community participation> rhetoric versus practice.....	231
Multiple accountability and limited space for deliberation.....	233
The way forward: Highlighting practices and making policy recommendations .....	234
Suggestions for the United Nations, the World Bank and other donors .....	235
Suggestions for the implementing NGOs .....	237
Suggestions for the communities .....	241
Suggestions for the host government .....	243
Contributions of the Study .....	244
Limitations of the Study.....	246
Conclusion .....	247
APPENDIX .....	266
Appendix A.....	266

Appendix B .....	267
Appendix C .....	268
Appendix D .....	269
Appendix E .....	270
Appendix F .....	271
Appendix G .....	271

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Located in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia is a country with a glorious history and ancient civilization. Inhabited by about eighty ethnic groups with distinct languages, my country is a mosaic of diverse cultures. We, Ethiopians, relish the fact that we are the only African nation that remained independent, after successfully defending the country against a modern Italian colonial army with just traditional weapons. As much as we celebrate our independence and cultural values, we acknowledge that our country is among the poorest nations in the world on almost all measures of economic progress.

Visiting my place of birth in 1993, 18 years after my family moved out, I was struck by the level of poverty I saw. I was only five when we left that very small community in the western part of the country. I was depressed to see the place had no electricity, running water, telephone service or a properly paved road. The "house" I was born in had gotten so old that it could have come down had it not been for the three big tree branches that supported it, extending from the outside of the wall to the ground. I wondered what life in my community was like around the time I was born. I wondered when it was going to improve. For the first time, I realized my life in the capital city was not that bad. Like many other Ethiopian children, I never had a toy or a proper ball. I loved soccer. The most common soccer "balls" we had as kids were old socks stuffed with rags or cotton. I never went to a swimming pool before I graduated from college. When I was a teenager, my first swimming "lesson" was offered to me by older kids in a polluted river, about a mile away from where I lived. I remember two kids from my neighborhood drown in that river trying to learn to swim by themselves. I did not have a bike throughout my childhood. I had no clue how ice cream tasted until my first year in



college. My mom struggled to provide us with basic food and clothing. But I still preferred to think we were a “middle-class” family, whatever that was supposed to mean. It probably was because I saw far worse cases of poverty than my family experienced.

There came another moment that led me to see real poverty. In 1998, I joined a major aid organization as a communication officer. My job involved writing "need stories," which were to be sent to the West, edited, and used as fundraising materials. I travelled deep in rural villages to find compelling stories. I remember weeping and getting depressed after listening to stories of people in abject poverty. I also handled the visits of several high profile donors (including American philanthropists like Howard Buffet and Hollywood actors Tim Reid and Blair Underwood). I have stood right by their side when some of these visitors cried like babies. I have seen famine-stricken children die a few minutes after I took their pictures.

I have witnessed multi-million dollar community development projects that failed to bear much fruit because we, the aid workers, got the strategies wrong. The communication between us and the communities we served were too top-down. In my days in the field, the protocol of communication was, for the most part, from center to periphery. Experts who came from out of the community tried to introduce innovations without little discussion with the communities. Almost all the big decisions were made at the headquarters or field offices of the NGOs.

I know what poverty is like. I can easily connect with discussions dealing with poverty and development. That is why the topic of this dissertation is so close to my heart. Eight out of every ten of my country's citizens make their living out of subsistence agriculture. The literacy rate stands at 43% (US State Department, 2011). Health facilities

are limited in number and capacity. Seventy-seven children die out of every 1,000 live births before reaching the age of five (US State Department, 2011). According to UNDP, Ethiopia's Human Development Index<sup>1</sup> for the year 2011 stands at a 0.363—in the low human development category—positioning the country at 174 out of 187 countries and territories (UNDP, 2011).

Famine has been a recurrent phenomenon in Ethiopia. Since 1973, the country has endured seven national droughts, though none has caused a famine as severe as the one 25 years ago (Oxfam, 2009). According to Oxfam GB, the 1984-1985 famine was so catastrophic that it killed about a million people. By late 1984, the suffering became sufficiently dramatic to attract the attention of Western mass media (Cutler, 1991). What “blew the story open” was a film shot by Mohamed Amin and narrated by Michael Buerk (Harrison & Palmer, 1986, p. 110). In October 1984, this Visnews film was shown first on BBC TV News on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of October and then around the world (Harrison & Palmer, 1986). The impact of the television coverage was extraordinary, “one of the rarest in the history of television” (Cutler, 1991, p.176). The shocking pictures “shattered the conscience of the world” (ICIHI, p. 9). Ethiopia became best known for famine (Gill, 2010). It became “the face of hunger,” “the iconic poor country” in the world (Gill, p. 2).

The NGO sector started actively engaging in Ethiopia in the early 1970s as a result of the devastating famine in the northern part of the country (Rahmato, Bantirgu & Endeshaw, 2010). Following the famines of 1973 and 1984, the number of NGOs increased. Later on with the change in government in 1990, a more conducive

---

<sup>1</sup> According to UNDP (2011) Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure for assessing long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living.

environment was established that further encouraged the growth of NGOs in Ethiopia. According to Rahmato et al., as of 2007, 1,976 NGOs, of which 234 NGOs (12%) were International, were operating in Ethiopia. These scholars argue that the Ethiopian NGO community is not as developed in terms of diversity in sectors engagement, size and capacity compared to many other African countries.

NGOs in Ethiopia began by providing relief services, which lasted for a long time. With an improvement in the situation after the famine, the focus of NGOs shifted towards helping drought-stricken people get back to normal life. This was then gradually followed by NGOs involvement in economic development programs. Unlike the periods of humanitarian assistance, where funding was raised from individuals through international campaigns, these long-term development programs required NGOs to establish themselves in communities and seek funding from Western donors. In the 1980s, there was an exponential growth of Western NGOs operating in Africa. The NGOs started to compete for funding. This required writing proposals that addressed issues important to donors. One of the issues that emerged at the time was the need for engaging communities in the development decision-making process. Thus, out of these circumstances the rhetoric of “community participation” emerged.

The purpose of this dissertation is to interrogate “community participation” both as an international, national, and local discourse and to attempt to understand the consequences of this discourse for the people living in rural Ethiopia. My analysis proceeds in two steps. First, I critically investigate the “community participation” discourses of two purposely selected intergovernmental donors (The UN and the World Bank) and two international NGOs working in Ethiopia, namely Oxfam Great Britain

(Oxfam GB) and World Vision. Second, I study grassroots interactions between NGO staffs and the Ethiopian communities they serve. In doing so, I investigate whether the rhetoric in the global public sphere has influenced "community participation" and deliberative practices on the ground.

I am uniquely well suited to carry out this project. I speak fluently the two languages spoken in Ethiopia in my research communities—Afaan Oromo and Amharic. I worked for five years as a communication officer for a major NGO working for Ethiopian economic development. I understand the nuances of the NGO-community interactions.

I am a pro-poor, social change-oriented communication scholar. I am passionate about rural community development and the initiatives aimed at making their lives better. I have a deep desire to see the poor have a voice on issues that matter to them. My identification with the poor and the advocate role I choose to assume allows me to make arguments that favor change of the status quo (Creswell, 2007; Hess, 2011). Creswell argues that the basic tenet of the advocacy worldview is that “research should contain an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of participants, the institutions in which they live and work, or even the researchers’ lives” (p. 21). Similarly, Hess (2011) argues that “criticism becomes enacted as advocacy” through a participatory approach allows the possibility of standing alongside those who seek changes to status quo conditions. By its very nature critical rhetorical study is emancipatory.

### **The Rhetoric of "Community Participation" as an Area of Inquiry**

The participation of citizens in decision-making processes has gained rhetorical popularity in the last three decades. Since the 1980s, it is rare to find a development

program that does not refer to participation (Angeles, 2005). The Google Ngram Viewer<sup>2</sup> shows constantly increasing use of the phrase “participatory development” between the years 1970 and 2000 (see appendix A). Cornwall and Brock (2005) argue that “participation” (along with “poverty reduction” and “empowerment”) has gained considerable purchase in recent years in the language of mainstream development.

Participation has become a prominent idea in social change discourses since many people are, at least in public, for democracy (Fischer, 2000; Gough et al., 2003; White, 1999). It is not possible to embrace democracy and reject the idea of engaging different actors in deliberations because democracy requires broadly based participation in a deliberative process to come up with “laws and policies that are more inclusive and more just than measures enacted by monarchs or powerful elites” (Hauser, 1999, p. 5).

There is a widely held view that grassroots community development initiatives must become democratic by engaging citizens in deliberations. Citizens who get truly involved in the decision-making aspects of development projects not only develop a sense of dignity and self-sufficiency but also become empowered in the process of deliberations. They will build capacities to deliberate over challenges they may face in the future. The participation of community members in affairs that affect their lives is a fundamental aspect of grassroots democracy and serves as a check and balance mechanism. Empowered community members will be in a better position to hold other development actors accountable.

---

<sup>2</sup> The Google Ngram Viewer is a phrase-usage graphing tool which charts the yearly count of selected n-grams (letter combinations), words, or phrases, as found in over 5.2 million books digitized by Google Inc. (up to 2008). The words or phrases (or ngrams) are matched by case sensitive spelling, comparing exact uppercase letters, and plotted on the graph if found in 40 or more books.<sup>1</sup> The Ngram tool was released in mid-December 2010

Participatory development was introduced as an alternative to the previously held notion that the mission of donor agencies was to “*deliver* development to poor countries” (Long, 2001, p.2). In the decades following World War II, international development was mainly a donor-driven and outsider-led venture (Cooks & Kothari, 2001). The rapid adoption of participation by international agencies in the late 1980s and early 1990s, according to Long (2001), “signified a major shift in development thinking” (p. 2).

In developing countries like Ethiopia, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are one group of players that are active in international development efforts to improve the welfare of poor people. They play increasingly important roles in fomenting democracy and solidarity within the global system (Dempsey, 2009; Werker & Ahmed, 2008). Especially in Africa, non-government organizations, associations and networks are considered a beacon of hope for democracy (Dempsey, 2009; Orvis, 2003). NGOs claim to provide venues for discourses unregulated by the state (Hauser, 1999). Funding agencies like the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) have high expectations for NGOs. They see NGOs as “promoters of democracy” (Lugar, 2006, p. v). They channel a huge amount of resources every year through NGOs partly because they believe grassroots based non-government organizations would make a better use of limited resources.

Given their active involvement in the international development arena, NGOs have created and circulated the discourses of community participation. As a result of these discourses, they have been embraced and promoted by international development agencies like the World Bank and by critics of top-down development (Fisher, 1997).

Despite the rhetoric, “genuine participation... is not in everyone’s interest” (Servaes, 1996, p. 23). White (1999) contends that the reality of participation is often at considerable variance from the rhetoric. This might be part of the reason why there are continued debates regarding how and to what extent communities should be involved in deliberations. There are people who think citizens do not have enough knowledge to participate meaningfully in policy decisions (Dempsey, 2009). Others claim it is difficult to legitimately deny citizens a place at the decision-making table despite their level of knowledge (Fischer, 2000). As a result, Fischer notes, many social scientists and politicians see citizen participation as caught in a dilemma between impossibility versus inevitability.

Streeten (1997) argues that NGOs usually use “participation” more “as a slogan than a thought-out strategy” (p. 193). Similarly, Dempsey (2009) contends that the assumption that the democratic culture may be found within civic society organizations does not hold true. She argues that these organizations are structured by a complex set of economic relationships and social and material inequalities. Dempsey also asserts that these inequalities contribute to the differential ability of groups and hence their roles in the global public sphere. In the process of attempting to improve a community’s circumstances, Dempsey (2009) posits that NGOs may privilege a certain kind of knowledge and eventually prevent these very citizens from speaking on their own behalf. So, it is important to discover how far NGOs that swear by democracy and citizen participation have gone in practice toward fulfilling the mission of “giving voice to the people” (Lugar, 2006, p. 1). Whether NGOs have been able to create amateur-friendly deliberative spaces or preferred to maintain an expert-dominated environment is an issue

worth examining. Some NGOs' current practices of limiting "community participation" to the involvement of rural communities in the provision of cheap manual labor might be the result of these inherent contradictions. There are also apparent tensions between the requirements of bracketing differences between participants, on the one hand, and maintaining the values and preconceived missions of NGOs, on the other hand.

Grassroots deliberative processes and relationships between communities and development agents, specifically as related to their differing positions of power, have been relatively unexplored (Gough et al., 2003; UNDP, 2009). The power differential takes a different level when NGOs based in the West are met with indigenous forms of organizing and community structures in Ethiopia. Thus, in this study, I trace the influence of the global discourse of participation to grassroots situations. I try to achieve this by analyzing discourses of selected international NGOs operating in rural Ethiopia, on the one hand, and learning the reactions of communities who are supposed to benefit from NGO-initiated programs, on the other hand. Whereas it is possible to study "community participation" by foregrounding its political, economic, social, or psychological aspects, this study is centered on its communication aspects. More specifically, I am interested in the rhetorical strategies organizations use to frame their messages of "community participation" and the deliberative processes agents of development follow in making collaborative decisions.

### **"Community Participation" as a Communication Problematic**

Chambers (2005) argues that participation can be analyzed mainly on two fronts—communication and resources. However, many writers do not see the communicative side of the participatory development equation. Exceptions to this are



communication scholars Shirley White, Robert Agunga, Colin Fraser, and Sonia Restrepo-Estrada who take a communicative approach in their analysis of participation and development. For example, White (1999) argues communication skills, based on a sound understanding of communication theory and practice, particularly participatory communication, are the foundation upon which the development facilitator builds. This, according to White, translates into the ability to engage in “supportive dialogue, active listening and unbiased observation” (p. 345). Similarly, Agungua (1997) takes the position that “people-centered development is essentially *a communication process* because it requires the agents of change to engage in dialogue with the people they seek to help” (p. xvi). Both these scholars believe development programs fail because many planners and workers are unable to address issues of communication due to their lack of training in communication skills. The other reason, according to Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (1998), is that the purposive use of communication for social change and development “remains one of the neglected issues of our time” (p. 5).

Social change is facilitated primarily through participatory communication. Pant (2009) contends that the process of development becomes more sustainable when “communication is a full partner in the development process and executed intelligently” (p. 543). Grassroots development efforts involve interpersonal dialogue and organizing. Communication and participation have been rightly described as “two sides of the same development coin” (Parks, Gray-Felder, Hunt & Byrne, 2006, p. 817). A development practitioner is first of all a “communication actor” (Bassette, 2004, p. 7). Bassette further notes the way we approach a local community, the attitude we adopt in interacting with community members, the way we understand and discuss issues, and the way we collect

and share information, “all involve ways of establishing communication with people” (p. 8).

Participation is also a rhetorical construct. First, it is a fluid concept sustained in discourse by different rhetors, including UN agencies, the World Bank, NGOs and academics. Cook and Kothari (2001) assert participatory development does not have a refined existence “out there” but is constructed by a cadre of development professionals whose ability to create and sustain this discourse is indicative of the power they possess (p. 15). Second, rhetoric is involved in both legitimating participatory development interventions and in obscuring practices that do not qualify as participatory. Third, development is said to be participatory when communities have the agency to make their voice heard (McPhail, 2009).

### **Significance of the Study**

The actual practice of community participation is far from the prescriptions and descriptions in organizational discourses. I am particularly interested in the voices of experts and citizens engaged in the practices of community participation. I understand the stakeholders in development range from peasants to local government officials to international actors, including NGOs and multilateral agencies like the World Bank and IMF. However, this dissertation limits itself to two main stakeholder groups.

The first group includes poor people living in rural Ethiopia who are educationally and economically disadvantaged. The World Bank (1996) argues it is important to focus on the participation of the poor and disadvantaged because these intended beneficiaries are usually without voice in the development process. Similarly UNDP (2009) observes:

There is a tendency for core planning teams not to involve certain stakeholders in planning. This typically occurs with complex programs and projects and work that involve developing policy. Marginalized groups, poor rural community members, minorities and others are often left out because planners assume that these groups are not well informed or educated enough to contribute to the planning process.

(p. 26)

The second group consists of international NGOs. I analyze the discourses in key written and audiovisual documents of my target NGOs and the attitudes and communicative practices of their workers on the ground. Since these workers are mostly experts in agriculture, health, education, rural infrastructure, and other component areas of development, it is important to discover their perceptions of and commitment to engaging citizens in development dialogue.

I focus on international NGOs because they are among the organizations that pioneered participatory approaches to community development (The World Bank, 1996). By international NGO, I mean non-profit, voluntary, private organizations operating at the international domain (Vedder, 2007). Their focus ranges from provision of humanitarian and development aid to promotion of good governance. Owing to their comparative advantage in the use of the communication technology, such NGOs spread these “buzzwords” to grassroots workers. Government office staffs and communities in Ethiopia usually get introduced to such discourses at NGO-organized local training meetings.

I picked two international NGOs for my study using a purposive sampling technique. By international NGOs, I mean transnational organizations and networks with

have presence in multiple countries (Dierks, 2001). Oxfam GB is a secular, advocacy-oriented international NGO with over 40 years of presence in Ethiopia. World Vision is an international Christian humanitarian organization. It has been active in Ethiopia in service delivery and advocacy since 1971. Both organizations bring in a large amount of resources and work with multiple communities in different parts of my country. Owing to my own connections, I had access to their documents and an opportunity to attend meetings they held with community members.

### **Theoretical and Practical Contributions**

The facilitation of citizen participation requires an appropriate organizational setup and a context for organizing for social change. NGO programs are good places to begin the investigation of the power relations and tensions around citizen participation. Since a good many of these NGOs have Western origins or funding, they uphold participation as a noble democratic value. However, my experiences as a field worker and the review of literature suggest that not all NGOs ensure genuine citizen participation in the locations in which they work. Specific to the Ethiopian context, development agents' claims of involving citizens in community-based projects are usually taken at face value. In this era of unprecedented technological innovation, the question of whether it is possible to involve largely uneducated, rural citizens of Ethiopia in increasingly scientific and complex development projects remains a difficult question to answer. A related question is whether citizens can meaningfully contribute to the deliberations and decision-making processes. Papa, Singhal, and Papa (2006) argue that the complexity of the enterprise becomes apparent when a group of disempowered people organizes for social change.

To the best of my knowledge, no critical investigation has been made in the Ethiopian context to address these questions from the perspective of NGOs and communication. Deetz (2007) contends that the issue of the nature of the stakeholder interaction in the decision-making process is often overlooked, even in fairly complete reviews of participation processes. So this study contributes to the theorization of citizen participation in development decision-making deliberations. The study also helps NGOs in Ethiopia to be cognizant of the dynamics of participation and perhaps adopt better models of stakeholder involvement.

### **Reading "Community Participation" Discourses through a Postcolonial Lens**

*“In the context of international development, post-colonialism reveals the ways in which development and development discourses can be read as part of a neo-colonial project that touches all levels of development activity-from the interventions of the IMF to the work of a small NGO” (McKinnon, 2006, p. 22).*

*“Post-colonial studies represent an important development paradigmatically in addressing the African development problematic” (Blake, 2009, p. 74).*

In this study, I use a postcolonial lens to question dominant cultural values and discourses surrounding community participation. Scholars generally describe postcolonial studies as an interdisciplinary field concerned with “theorizing about colonialism and decolonization” (Shome & Hegde, 2001, p. 250). According to Kavoori (1998), “The post-colonial position addresses issues of power and hegemony in an altered, globalized and postmodern world” (p. 196). Its overarching goal is dismantling the colonial enterprise by “exposing the Eurocentricism and imperialism of Western discourses” (Shome, 1996, p. 41). For Shome and Hegde (2001), the postcolonial paradigm is distinct

from most contemporary critical approaches because its scope extends beyond the nation and its historical and international depth provide an understanding of cultural power. Postcolonialism has been accused of a preoccupation with theory, resulting in scholarship that is impractical and inaccessible (Shome & Hegde, 2001)

McEwan (2009) argues there is no single origin of postcolonialism. She posits that postcolonialism, as an academic inquiry, is inspired by “a number of responses to colonialism and decolonization” (p. 34). The development of postcolonialism into a major critical paradigm is tightly connected to the Subaltern Studies Group in South Asian studies, the study of fiction written in former colonial countries (McEwan, 2009) and the work of comparative literature scholars based in the United States (Kavoori, 1998). Neither the origins nor the scope of postcolonial theory seem to be clear. These are subjects of continued debate. What is more important to me is that postcolonial theory today is “concerned with revealing the situatedness of knowledge, and particularly the universalizing knowledge produced in imperial Europe and the West most broadly” (McEwan, 2009, p. 34). Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak are frequently cited as significant contributors to the development of postcolonial theory. The publication of Edward Said’s seminal work, *Orientalism*, in 1978 is arguably the starting point of postcolonial theory.

Postcolonialism is a contested field (Baaz, 2005; Kapoor, 2008; McEwan, 2009). According to McEwan, different people understand postcolonialism differently. Some see it as a period “after colonialism”; others think it is a “condition related to the state after colonialism”; still some others view it as a “metaphysical, ethical and political theory dealing with issues such as identity, race, ethnicity and gender” (p. 17). Part of the

debate and criticism has to do with the meaning of the prefix “post-.” On the one hand, it seems to connote the time after colonialism. For example, Kavoor’s (1998) argument that “the term [post-colonial] should be reserved for the future state (the time after colonialism),” is indicative of the use of the hyphenated “post-colonial.” On the other hand, “post-colonial” suggests what McEwan (2009) would call “*critical aftermath*,” which refers to “cultures, discourses and critiques that lie beyond but remain closely influenced by colonialism” (p. 17). My use of the term “postcolonial” here does not refer to an achieved state that follows the formal European colonization of the Global South. In my study, I am interested in indirect domination, which continues long after brute colonialism ended.

The postcolonial lens provides a more profound insight into the neo-colonial power structures underlying contemporary approaches to international development. Postcolonial criticism constitutes indeed an appropriate model for dealing with these geopolitical problems (Hasian, 2001). That is why scholars from a range of other disciplines including political science, critical studies and literature employ the postcolonial lens to study various aspect of international relations (Chandler, 2011; Newman, 1995; Wa Thiong’o, 1986). I am using the postcolonial frame to better address concerns with the Western conceptualization of participation and elite-driven development approaches and practices. It also helps me to understand how the institutional practices of international NGOs silence the subaltern communities in Ethiopia. My study qualifies as postcolonial because I adopt a pro-poor and emancipatory political stance (Shome & Hedge, 2001).

Although never colonized, Ethiopia has never been freed from the negative effects of colonialist discourses. High levels of poverty and frequent humanitarian crises resulting from famines have brought many NGOs and attracted a great deal of international aid to Ethiopia. NGOs do a wonderful job of lifesaving, rehabilitating communities, and engaging in long-term development programs. Notwithstanding such meritorious achievements, I argue that there is a need to study critically all sides of NGOs' contributions. I argue, along with many other critics, that the practices of NGOs fall short of the promises in their participatory rhetoric. One of the reasons for this could be that they are faced with the dilemma of serving with missionary and philanthropic zeal, on the one hand, and responding to the interests of donors and governments in their home countries, on the other hand. In the middle of such tensions it is possible that they serve a western neo-imperial agenda, either intentionally or unintentionally. NGO development interventions did not come to Ethiopia without some kind of ideological string attached to them, to be sure. Some critics describe NGOs as a friendlier means of implementing neo-colonial policy (Amutabi, 2006; Chandler, 2011). Chandler (2011) sees NGOs, especially the "activist" ones, as "idea-generating, non-state actors" in the international sphere (p. 114). The postcolonial critical model permits me to investigate whether and to what extent the legacy of colonization is embedded in the discourses and practices of the international NGOs I studied.

I particularly explore participation in the context of development projects initiated by NGOs. Postcolonial theory is relevant for the study of development because it provides tools for making sense of development in different ways and also creating "space for alternative development knowledge" (McEwan, 74). McEwan (2009) posits



that development is one of the dominant western discourses that the postcolonial approach seeks to challenge. McKinnon (2006) argues, “the development community has turned increasingly to participatory approaches and a discourse of ‘the local’ because of ‘concerns around development as an imperialist or neo-colonial project’” (p. 23).

A postcolonial approach is perfectly aligned with my focus on critiquing discourses, including narratives, concepts, ideologies and signifying practices (McEwan, 2009). According to Mohan (2001), “Postcolonial studies alert us to the epistemic violence of Eurocentric discourses of the non-West and the possibilities of recovering the voices of the marginalized” (p. 157). My analysis of community participation makes more sense when it is situated in the broader context of colonial history.

In a special issue of *Communication Theory*, devoted to furthering the dialogue on postcolonial theory, Shome and Hedge (2001) argue that postcolonial and communication studies have a lot to offer one another as both fields are concerned with discourses of modernity. These communication scholars claim that “a postcolonial intervention pushes for more socially responsible problematization of communication” eventually leading to “a more just and equitable knowledge base about the third world, the other and the ‘rest’ of the world” (p. 261). Postcolonial approaches provide communication scholars with an “intellectual fervor and language to deconstruct privilege and account for the complex interconnections between power, experience and culture” (p. 262). To this end, they identify issues of identity, representation, agency and cultural hybridity as some of the possible sites of postcolonial engagement for communication scholarship. Similarly, Shome (1996) underlines the need for rhetoricians to place the texts they critique or the theories they produce “against a larger backdrop of neocolonialism and racism” (P. 41).

Similarly, Hasian (2001) identifies authority, the question of who can “speak” for “other” and social agency and responsibility as some of the “key issues” that are involved in the rhetorical investigations that build on postcolonial insights (p. 23). Some communication scholars have conducted postcolonial studies (Broadfoot & Munshi, 2007; Ganesh, Zoller & Cheney, 2005; Grimes & Parker, 2009; Prasad, 1997). This study contributes to the emerging postcolonial scholarship in the field of communication studies.

### **The Rhetorical Space in Ethiopia**

Ethiopia is a federal republic under its 1994 constitution. There are opposition parties and elections are held every five years. However, a free, liberal democracy remains a distant goal for Ethiopia (Lugar, 2006). The current ruling party, the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), has governed the country since 1991. Following the 1994 press freedom bill, there was promising progress toward the development of a critical press. After a bitterly contested election in 2005, the government took legal and administrative steps to suppress critical voices in the country, including newspapers and civil society organizations. There are hardly any independent electronic media that deal with politics per se.

The Ethiopian Constitution guarantees democratic rights, including freedom of expression and association. For example, Article 29, Sub-Article 2 states:

Everyone has the right to freedom of expression without any interference. This right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any media of his choice.

From the point of view of my research, another important provision of the Constitution is Article 30, which ensures “Every person has the right to freedom of association for any cause or purpose.” Similarly the right of assembly, demonstration and petition is protected under Article 30, Sub-Article 1:

Everyone has the right to assemble and to demonstrate together with others peaceably and unarmed, and to petition. Appropriate regulations may be made in the interest of public convenience relating to the location of open-air meetings and the route of movement of demonstrators or, for the protection of democratic rights, public morality and peace during such a meeting or demonstration.

These articles provide the Constitutional basis for communal democratic space, where critical public opinion might be formed and circulated. The legal provisions sound great as most of them were fashioned after model documents from democratic nations, as the government of Ethiopia admits. Some critical scholars and political analysts claim the Ethiopian Constitution is nominal as the behavior and practices of the government do not correspond to the written provisions (Vestal, 1999). Notwithstanding their biases, international monitoring organizations like Freedom House, Article 19 and International Press Institute did not find a functioning democracy in Ethiopia. In their 2011 rating of countries for freedom, both *The Economist* and Freedom House put Ethiopia under the authoritarian/not free category.

The current Ethiopian federal administrative structure has nine regional states (*killils*), formed, by and large, on the basis of ethnic homogeneity, and two federal city administrations-Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa (Bariagaber, 2006). According to Markakis (2011), the merit of federalism as a facilitator of diversity in governments is far from

obvious in the case of Ethiopia, where “a rigidly uniform system is imposed that does not allow the slightest departure from the prototype designed in Addis Ababa” (pp. 241-242).

The administrative structure of the Ethiopian state rests on the *woreda*, which ideally is supposed to have 100,000 inhabitants (Markakis, 2011). Since all federal and regional state agencies are represented at this level, Markakis argues, the *woreda* is well positioned to play an effective role in local government. The unit below the *woreda* is the *kebele*. This is the level where the state actually reaches the people. The population of a *kebele* greatly varies from a few hundred to several thousand depending on the settlement pattern of the people. The *kebele* has an elected council, executive committee, militia unit, court and prison to enforce state laws. The *kebele* is in charge of collecting taxes, controlling land (the most important resource) and its distributions, collecting fertilizer loan repayments, issuing identity cards, and writing recommendation letters for people applying for public services at regional and federal levels (Markakis, 2011).

The state has structures below the *kebele* level. The *kebele* is subdivided into three zones (Sub-*kebles*) and further down into *gere/got* (groups) and one-to-five clusters. One-to-five cluster is a structure the government recently introduced "to effectively mobilize" citizens and "engage them in development." A household head is in charge of watching and reporting the political life of every member of five households in his/her vicinity. Some scholars and political activists believe the system is motivated by surveillance purposes. In addition, there are different committees such as the village development committee set up by the state and sometimes NGOs. It is apparent that the grassroots government structures are increasingly powerful instruments in getting across state ideas

in a top-down fashion. The NGOs are required to involve the *kebele* officials in most of their meetings with communities or at least get the blessing of the local officials.

In January 2009, the Ethiopian Parliament passed legislation to regulate civil society organizations (CSOs). NGOs complain that the new law is restrictive in demarcating areas of operations for different types of CSOs (for example, by excluding those receiving more than 10% of funding from external sources from many areas of activity such as advocacy on policy issues, human rights and voter education).

### **Outline of the Study**

In the first chapter, I tried to achieve two things. First, I identified the rationale for this study, the purpose of the study and its significance. Second, I characterized the rhetorical situation in Ethiopia. In Chapter 2, I review relevant literature on the rhetoric of "community participation," its theoretical bases, its evolution, and the attendant rhetoric about participation and its reality. The chapter also sheds light on the nature of nongovernmental organizations and their role and impact on development in Africa. Chapter 3 describes my methodological approach. Chapter 4 presents the rhetorical analyses of "community participation" discourses by selected organizations. Chapters 5 and 6 detail the ethnographic and interview data respectively. They provide a rhetorical analysis of each of my case organizations. Finally, in chapter 7 I bring findings of the rhetorical and field data analysis in conversation before concluding the project with a discussion of the implications of major findings for the lives of the poor and also for furthering theories of public deliberation.

## CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT TO THE RHETORIC OF COMMUNITY

### PARTICIPATION

Describing the rhetorical situation is a very important condition for a critical reading of discourses. Unless we understand the context in which the meaning of “participation” is created and negotiated, we will be unable to sufficiently explain why communicators chose to use certain rhetorical strategies rather than others. Thus, in this chapter, I will justify participation as an important ideograph rooted in democracy. I do this by highlighting the theoretical foundations of “participation” and discussing how the concept of “participation” evolved over time. Then, I discuss “participation” as conceptualized by contemporary thinkers and practitioners of development and see to what extent the reality matches the rhetoric. Finally, I offer an overview of how international organizations like the UN and the World Bank rhetorically explain and justify their interests and how far they contribute to public discourses of participation.

#### Theoretical Foundations of Participation Discourses

In thinking about participation, we can look back to the ancient Greeks and wonder about the highest level of participation regular citizens enjoyed in the deliberations over almost all issues that mattered to them. In many ways ancient Athens’s political culture provides the prototype of participation (Hauser, 1999; Mansuri & Rao, 2013). Hansen (2005) singles out the “unparalleled” degree of participation as “the most amazing aspect of Athenians’ democracy” (p. 23). According to Hansen, each of the 40 assemblies (*ekklesia*) Athenians held every year were attended by no less than 6,000 of the total 30,000 adult male citizens. Every free man (with the exception of slaves, women, children, and foreigners) had the right to speak, debate and vote on issues tabled

for discussion by a council of five hundred ordinary people elected by lot (Hansen, 2005; Hauser, 1999). Hauser argues that the Greeks regarded deliberative performances as the method for clarifying vague or poorly understood problems, for uncovering new ways to frame issues, for resolving impasses, and for discovering shared grounds for communal action.

One lesson we may draw from the political culture of the Athenians is that the participation of citizens is possible ideally in amateur-friendly societies where expertise is not required to actively take part in political processes. Hauser (1999) points out the Athenians were confident that public deliberation would surpass elite expertise for steering the polis. When participation is reduced to competence in technical expertise, average citizens find themselves mute and puzzled observers. Mansuri and Rao (2013) argue public debate and deliberation have been a highly regarded form of governance in Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and pre-colonial Africa.

In the contemporary world, Gandhi's notion of *village self-reliance*, Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and Habermas's *communicative rationality* are among the important theoretical visions of participation along with the 18th and 19th century articulation of participation by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Stuart Mill (Mansuri & Rao, 2003; Mansuri & Rao, 2013). I do not intend to make a comprehensive review of how the idea of participation evolved over time. In what follows, I highlight how some of the great thinkers in history speak to the scheme of popular participation in general and my thesis in particular. In so doing, I argue that participation is an important ideograph, which sits at the heart of every theory of democracy, justice, and sustainable social change.

To begin with, Vyas (1962), who studied Gandhi's manuscripts and put them together in the form of a book, observes, "Ancient Greek City States and village republics of India provided specimens of all-round development of rich and puissant life" (p. 7). He posits Gandhi's village *Swaraj*<sup>3</sup> is "a genuine and virile democracy which offers a potent cure for many of the political ills that mark the present political systems" (p. 10).

According to Vyas (1962), Gandhi observed, "True democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the center. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village." Gandhi considered the village as the decentralized, small political unit endowed with full powers where every individual would have a direct voice in the government (Vyas, 1962). He was against centralization because "centralization cannot be sustained and defended without adequate force" (p. 52). The village is the locus of democratic governance for Gandhi. "If the village perishes," Gandhi pointed out, "India will perish too" (p. 43). Vyas explains the government of the village will be by "a Panchayat<sup>4</sup> of five persons annually elected by adult villagers possessing minimum prescribed qualifications" (pp. 9-10). According to Vyas, Gandhi envisioned a local system of government of citizens, which is self-controlled and results in empowered citizens with a highly developed sense of civic responsibility. Putting authority-control at bay was an important condition for bottom-up governance to thrive. Gandhi was a firm believer in the capacity of any people to be the architect of their own development. He argued, "As every country is fit to eat, to drink and to breathe, even so is every nation fit to manage its

---

<sup>3</sup>The word *Swaraj* is a sacred word which means self-rule and self-restraint, and not freedom from all restraint which "independence" often means. It means government by the many. Where the many are immoral or selfish, their government can spell anarchy and nothing else. (Gandhi, 1962)

<sup>4</sup> Panchayat is the legislature, judiciary and executive rolled into one as there will be no system of punishment in it (Vyas, 1962)



own affairs, no matter how badly" (1962, p. 16). This view is consistent with a postcolonial thesis. This does not come as a surprise given Gandhi's critical position in regard to India's colonial rule by the British. Emphasizing the need to have system of government independent from the colonial powers, Gandhi argued, "They have systems suited to their genius. We must have ours suited to ours" (p. 16).

Gandhi was a firm advocate of participation by all able-bodied citizens and not only free men unlike the Athenians. He held the view that village communities should work hard and become self-sufficient in things ranging from food to clothing to ideas for social change. Community participation and empowerment are interrelated and intertwined in Gandhi's thoughts (Richards, 1991). According to Johnson (2006), Gandhi had three "new" understandings of participation: 1) participation involves showing ordinary people that politics continually intrudes into their daily lives, 2) people act politically when they engage in services that can involve everyone, and 3) leaders are those who dedicate their lives to the well-being of their communities and express their politics through service. Mansuri and Rao (2013) contend, "Gandhi remains a central figure in the participatory and decentralization movements in both India and the development community at large" (p. 23).

Paulo Freire's landmark book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, is credited for playing a key role in triggering discussions over bottom-up participation in the development process (Angeles, 2005). A number of scholars suggest that the roots of participatory approaches could be traced back to Freire and his 1960s activist work (Forsyth, 2005; Francis, 2001; Long, 2001; McPhail, 2009; Servaes, 1996). Freire has provided a strong theoretical foundation for participatory approaches to development. It is difficult to find

contemporary scholars and practitioners of development who do not draw from Freire. Although Freire's theorization is focused on the education of illiterate adults, it also speaks to the participation of marginalized societies in development decision-making.

Freire's (1993) main argument is that a pedagogy that enables marginalized people to regain their humanity must be forged "with, not for the oppressed" (p. 53). Pedagogy of the oppressed is "a pedagogy of people engaged in the fight for their own liberation" (p. 53). He argues, "No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunate" (p. 54). According to Freire, the participation of the oppressed is the struggle "for their redemption" (p. 54). He emphasizes that liberation should be "not pseudo-participation, but committed involvement" (p. 69). When students and teachers cooperatively engage in learning, argues Freire, students acquire a sense of dignity and develop the ability to transform the world around them. This argument very much informs the contemporary scholarship that claims community empowerment is one of the most important outcomes of participatory approaches. Freire further explains:

Critical and liberating dialogue, which presupposes action, must be carried on with the oppressed at whatever the stage of their struggle for liberation. . . . But to substitute monologue, slogans, and communiqués for dialogue is to attempt to liberate the oppressed with the instruments of domestication. Attempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building; it is to lead them into the populist pitfall and transform them into masses which can be manipulated. (p. 65)

Freire (1993) underlines the need to have trust in the oppressed and in their ability to reason. According to Freire, "Whoever lacks in this trust will fail to initiate (or will abandon) dialogue, reflection, and communication" (p. 66). Freire conceptualized dialogue as a means of learning and knowing (Macedo, 2000).

The Freirian conviction in the poor's ability to be the architects of their own transformation has been widely influential. For example, Roger Chambers (1994), a prominent development thinker, makes it clear that Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), a participatory research and development method of the 1980s, and its 1990 equivalent, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA),<sup>5</sup> owe much to the work and inspiration of Paulo Freire.

Kulynych (1997) recognizes the strong philosophical impetus Habermas and Foucault provided for conceptualizing participation. However, she argues that neither of these philosophers provides "a fully satisfying solution to the difficulties of understanding political action in this postmodern world" (p. 315). According to Kulynych, "combining Habermas's vision of discursive politics with Foucault's focus on the micro politics of resistance provides a basis for developing a more satisfying conception that defines political participation" (p. 315).

For Habermas participation is taking part in communicatively achieved argument and negotiation. Habermas distinguishes two types of communicative actions: a form of problem-solving or decision-oriented deliberation, which occurs in such places as parliament, and informal opinion-formation, which is open and inclusive (Kulynych,

---

<sup>5</sup>According to Chambers (1994), RRA and PRA are two closely related families of approaches and of methods used "to enable rural people to share, enhance, and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act" (p. 953).

1997). The later aspect of Habermas's theory of communicative rationality speaks to participation in grassroots development. According to Habermas's theory of rationality, what is right and the better way of doing development, for instance, is to be determined solely by the participants in that process of deliberation. This is in line with the rather ideal tenets of participatory development. Habermas (1983) sees communicative rationality as "unconstrained, unifying, consensus-bringing force of argumentative speech" (p. 10).

Foucault argues that the exercise of power has taken new forms in the modern era (Taylor, 2011). Foucault (1983) sees power not as a "thing" but as relational and always residing everywhere, interwoven with social interactions, including relationships of communication. For Foucault, communicating is a certain way of acting upon another person or persons. Foucault (1983) makes it clear that private ventures, welfare societies, benefactors, and philanthropists, as he conceptualizes it, can exercise power. NGOs cannot be free from the analysis of power relationships simply because they are in the business of "empowering" communities. For example, Hailey (2001) uses a Foucauldian analysis of power as a frame to question the "formulaic approaches" of South Asian NGOs to participatory development. He argues Foucault would suggest that we would never gain a critical insight into their real role and influence unless we understand why the development community in general and development "experts" in particular, promote such participative approaches (p. 97).

Foucault gives us the theoretical basis for the explanation of how the poor and less powerful could be deprived of agency in the process of social change. Drawing from Foucault's idea of the "knowledge-power" nexus, Angeles (2005) argues, "the push for

participation and use of participatory development approaches by international funding agencies and intermediary NGOs becomes a new form of ‘tyranny’ or ‘social control’ that only results in the greater manageability of the poor and other supposed beneficiaries of development initiatives” (p. 511).

Edward Said’s (1979) influential book, *Orientalism*, does a very good job of grounding issues of participation in postcolonial theory. Said critically observes how Western discourses about the Third World dictate thoughts and actions. Orientalism is about the organized rhetorical portrayal of the Middle Eastern other by the West. Orientalism, Said argues, is used to justify attempts to spread democracy and Eurocentric ways to the Middle East. Orientalism, in the words of Said (1979), “was a project uniquely able to override objections of those who were consulted and, in improving the Orient as a whole, to do what scheming Egyptians, perfidious Chinese, and half-naked Indians could never have done for themselves” (p. 90). Said (1979) contends understanding discourses surrounding Orientalism is key to appreciating the systems European culture employed to manage and even produce “the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period” (p. 3).

Said (2009) believes the preconceived ideas of the West about the Orient are fundamentally distorted. Orientals were largely portrayed “not as citizens, or even people, but as problems to be solved or confined or . . . taken over” (p. 207). He sees representation of other cultural units as problematic when those people are categorized into a stereotyped position and when they are spoken about and spoken for in certain ways. Thus, he tries to deconstruct Eurocentric discourses that perpetuate colonialism and

the forms of representation that emerges from colonialism. He does this by situating his analysis of Oriental discourses within the historical context of the conquest of others by the Western imperial powers (most importantly the British and the French). He also discusses Americans' experience with the Orient, which is more indirect rather than direct colonial occupation. In relation to Said's postcolonial theorization, I seek to understand if the portrayal of the people of Africa as "barbaric," "backward," and "incompetent" might have affected the discourses and operations of Western-based NGOs working in Ethiopia.

Said is mainly concerned with issues of cultural hegemony and lack of opportunities for the subaltern communities to speak for themselves. This concern is consistent with Foucault's idea of power that is created as a result of structural dissemination of discourses. Based on the proceeding theoretical backdrops, I take the position that the poor and marginalized should have a major role in all stages of development. I adopt this standpoint because I believe genuine dialogue between NGO development workers and citizen experiences would provide some discursive space for the invention of better ideas for social change. With these theoretical foundations of participation in mind, I examine contemporary conceptualizations of participation and participatory development practices of NGOs.

### **Participation: Meaning, Rhetoric and Reality**

Although the need for more participation in the development process is generally acknowledged, participation is a fluid concept which continues to evolve. Behera (2006) argues, like the concept of development, the concept of participation is a changing reality. Ever changing global political and economic orders explain the changes in the essence of participation. For example community participation in the Global South during the

colonial era cannot be similar to participation in the postcolonial period. Chambers (2005) argues, “Participation has no final meaning. It is not a rock. It is mobile and malleable, an amoeba, a sculptor’s clay, a plasticine shaped as it passes from hand to hand” (p. 104). Participation is a rich concept, which means different things to different people. For some, participation is an end in itself; for others, it is a means to reach a certain goal (Servaes, 1996; World Bank, 1996). The definitions of participation vary (Chambers, 2005; Schneider & Libercier, 1995). For example, Long (2001) defines it as “involvement of poor and marginalized people in decision-making roles regarding all important aspects of donor-funded projects or policies” (p. 2). For the World Bank (1996), participation is “a process through which stakeholders control over development initiatives and the decisions which affect them” (p. xi). If this is the way participation in general is conceptualized, what, then, is community participation? “By ‘community participation’ we mean facilitating the active involvement of different community groups, together with other stakeholders involved, and the many development and research agents working with the community and decision makers” (Bessette, 2004, p. 1)

The main assumption of participatory development is that local people realize their potential and that outsiders simply facilitate their discovery of themselves (Chambers, 2005; Pant, 2009; White 1999). According to Pant (2009), the organizing takes place “in an empowering way and also in a sustainable way so that when the outsider exits from the community, the community can continue on its own as it has achieved the variable of self-reliance above all other attributes” (p. 544). Participatory approaches claim people are the most important elements of development. It is a people-centered approach (Chambers, 2005; White, 1999). Participation also entails the belief

that every person's voice is equal (White, 1999). Participatory approaches see problems of development as inherently resulting from structural power inequality (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). Thus, such approaches advance the proposition that marginalized communities can control their own social change. There is a widely shared view among development practitioners that without commitment, creativity, energy, and involvement of communities, the pace of development will not accelerate (Manuri & Rao, 2013; Pant, 2009). "The bottom line," Chambers (2005) writes, "is empowering of those who are marginalized, powerless and poor" (p. 87). Schneider and Libercier (1995) see participation in decision making as a key indicator of genuine participation along with empowerment.

As much as there is a widespread adoption of the rhetoric of participation in development, there is no clear understanding of what constitutes meaningful and effective participation. There is variation in the ways the degree of participation is described. Some scholars prefer to view participation along a continuum with passive participation on one end and self-mobilization on the other (Chambers, 2005; Kumar, 2002).

Participation is believed to thrive in democratic systems and contribute to democratization. Pant (2009) argues that participation can be coercive and manipulative in nondemocratic societies. Even in a nation considered to be democratic, it is possible for some groups to lack sufficient free space for deliberations. Evans and Boyte (1992) argue that the concept of direct participation involved the idea of free and active debating from ancient Greece. They contend that particular uncontrolled public places in a community become important venues for alternative discourses to develop. According to Evans and Boyte free spaces are:



The environments in which people are able to learn a new self-respect, a deeper and more assertive group identity, public skills, and values of cooperation and civic virtue. Put simply, free spaces are settings between private lives and large-scale institutions where ordinary citizens can act with dignity, independence and vision. These are, in the main, voluntary forms of association with a relatively open with and participatory character-many religious organizations, clubs, self-help and mutual aid societies, reform groups, neighborhood, civic, and ethnic groups, and a host of other associations grounded in the fabric of community life. (pp. 17-18)

Evans and Boyte (1992) also claim that people use such free spaces as places to exercise "a schooling in citizenship" and learn "a vision of the common good in the course of struggling for change (p.18).

The other bone of contention in the development debate is what expertise is and the appropriate roles of citizens and experts. While development discourse largely embraces increased community participation as beneficial in decisions that require relatively more local knowledge, there is a debate over whether communities should be involved in projects that require expertise. On this view, communities remedy their lack of technical knowledge by contracting out decisions to experts. "Expertise" itself is defined discursively by the powerful. Foucault talks about knowledge as constituted in discourse. For Foucault power and knowledge imply, implicate and presuppose one another (Foss et al., 2002).

There seems to be a paradox in calling for a greater participation of the oppressed and claiming only a certain type of knowledge is expert knowledge. Gough et al. (2003)

argue, “In parallel to an increased commitment to ‘democratic’ practices over the past few centuries, knowledge has become increasingly the domain of ‘scientific’ expertise and oriented mainly toward producing end results” (p. 39). Khwaja (2004) develops a model that predicts community participation may not always be desirable. He uses primary data on development projects in Northern Pakistan to provide empirical support for this prediction. The study concludes, “While community participation improves project outcomes in nontechnical decisions, increasing community participation in technical decisions actually leads to worse project outcomes” (p. 427).

As professionals, international NGO workers generally tend to favor scientific rationality over indigenous knowledge and communicative rationality. Whereas scientists believe in science as a superior approach to understanding and explaining reality, those who embrace communicative rationality argue that people can reach at better solutions to specific problems through a collaborative process of communication. I argue that experts tend to portray science as the only way of knowing, usually with the motive of suppressing the voices of those lacking scientific knowledge. Servaes (1996) is critical of the effort to further marginalize the poor under the guise of lack of “expertise.”

The assertion of knowledge gap, of a disparity in valid knowledge between “experts” and local people, is wrong. Unless the “experts” through cooperation and learning from local people, can apply their knowledge in the context and to the benefit of those locals, “expertise,” remains not much more than piety.

Attitude is paramount for the facilitator. He/She must truly believe that the participants are not only capable, but are indeed the most qualified persons for the task at hand. (p. 24)

Similarly, Gough et al. (2003) underline the need to avoid the notion of correct (expert) perceptions and incorrect (non-expert) perceptions within the social change debate. They recognize the tensions between the calls for “public participation” as a political good in itself and as a technique for the future enhancement of expert knowledge.

A lot of development organizations pay lip service to the fashionable concept of participation. Robert Chambers (2005) observes that there may be a wide gap between the senses in which participation is used and the reality on the ground. Scholars contend the reality of participation has often differed from the rhetoric (Chambers, 1999; White, 1999). Despite the participatory rhetoric, practices in development remain top-down. “People’s participation,” White (1999) posits, “was easy to talk about, hard to achieve,” (p. 12). She further notes, “Authentic participation of grassroots people is more an ideal than a reality” (p. 16). Similarly Simmons (2007) contends that current models of public participation are “ineffective for involving the public in the decision-making process in ethical and significant ways.” She argues public participation practices focused on either bombarding the publics with a one-way communication or holding meetings in which the public could make comments but not influence final policies.” She further explains, “citizens have very little say and almost no power” to influence decisions “even when it affects their own neighborhoods” (p. 3). For Mafalopulos (2008), “Frequently what is often referred to as ‘participation’ in many cases is not, at least not in a significant way” (p. 9).

Participation is about power relations. Chambers (2005) suggests the gaps between the rhetoric and practice in local participation surfaces when we look into who

participates, what institutions are involved, and the objectives and functions of participation.

When it is not done right, White (1999) argues, participation becomes “pseudo-participation at best” (p. 338). Other than labeling non-participatory practices as participation, discourses of participatory development, according to some scholars, may legitimate and mask tyranny (Baaz, 2005; Cook & Kothari, 2001). Practices that are taken on face value as participatory may end up serving the interests of the powerful.

### **The Link between NGOs’ Discourses and Approaches to Development**

Terms that we put to use in development discourses are never neutral and static. According to Cornwall and Brock (2005), terms come to be given meaning as they are used in policies and these policies, in turn, influence how those who work in development come to think about what they are doing. They suggest that discursive framings are important in shaping development practices, even if a host of other factors come into play in affecting what actually happens on the ground. Making sense of what influence “buzzwords” like participation have on development calls for paying closer attention to the discourses they are embedded in (Cornwall & Brock, 2005). Although participation is a politically desirable development idea, different institutions frame participation differently and sign up for it for different reasons (Mosse, 2003).

“The mainstreaming of participation,” write Mansuri and Rao (2003), “has made it an instrument for promoting pragmatic policy interests, such as cost-effective delivery, low costs of maintenance etc. rather than a vehicle for radical transformation of society” (pp. 8-9). Mansuri and Rao argue that participation has been described both in Asia and Africa as a form of forced labor where the poor are coerced into making contributions

that are far more substantial than those made by the rich. Additionally, they elaborate on this particular meaning of participation:

During the 1980s, earlier people-centered narratives of popular participation met the exigencies arising out of neoliberal reforms and the realities of the rolled-back state. Community participation became a channel through which popular participation began to be operationalized. In the process, it took a rather different shape than that conveyed by the statements of intent that preceded it. Rather than seeking to involve “the people” in defining their own development, 1980s community participation largely focused on engaging “intended beneficiaries” in development projects. Cost-sharing and the co-production of services emerged as dominant modes of participation; the concept of ownership began to be stripped of any association with a transfer of power and control and invoked to describe the need for people to make contributions in cash or kind to support these processes. (p. 9)

Although there have been certain changes in the discursive constructions and practices of participation in later years (owing to historical circumstances like grassroots resistance to policies of Structural Adjustment Programs of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund), keeping costs down through community contributions remains a dominant conception of participation (Cornwall & Brock, 2005). There is an effort on the part of the powerful development actors like experts working for NGOs to frame participation as inclusion of the disenfranchised in expert-initiated, mostly Western projects. Servaes (1996) considers this a major misconception of development practitioners. “Participation,” he argues, “should not be constructed as the inclusion of

the poor in government programs and services, but rather the formulation of government programs and services as per the informed and autonomous choice of the poor” (p. 24).

In the case of Africa, the top-down, modernization theory of development has been abandoned. However, there is no agreement on a replacement narrative. “Some African philosophers,” Jacobson (2004) writes, “would embrace the West’s approach to knowledge. But many embrace a more postmodernist approach. And others would seek different alternatives still. They would seek a uniquely African style of thinking” (p. 65).

I take an African standpoint approach in analyzing participation discourses. According to Allen (1996), “standpoint theory is based on the idea that the world looks different depending on one’s social location” (p. 178). Parallel to Allen’s argument, I would say this theory allows me to speak from and about African experiences. My five years of experience working at the grassroots level as a Communications Officer and Coordinator for an international NGO is a point of entry. Standpoint theory offers me a frame to identify instances of domination, exploitation, and hegemony. Allen uses standpoint to theorize about organizational socialization of black women. However, she indicates that it can be used to study any marginalized groups of persons. By taking an Afrocentric standpoint, I am able to focus specifically on an Ethiopian context and contribute to the theorizing on community-level deliberations. Allen contends context matters in the construction of reality and urges researchers to consider political and historical contexts in an effort to create knowledge.

Reliance upon local knowledge and local capability might be a good place to improve engagement with African communities. According to Asante (2004), any discussion of communication or development in Africa must begin with the conception of

Africans as actors, not spectators, to the major transformations on the continent. Asante is critical of African scholars abandoning their historical experiences to imitate what had occurred elsewhere. “Development,” he argues, “if it is to be anything, in the context of African agency must mean the arrival of African people to a social, cultural, and economic place where the philosophies, opinions, and technologies supporting communication reflect Africa’s best interests and not those of former colonial or conquering powers” (p.6).

Behera (2006) posits that development discourses have levels ranging from the policy level at which international aid agencies set objectives and priorities to grassroots dialogues between development actors. I assume most development rhetoric originates from the international headquarters of NGOs and multilateral organizations. Mosse (2003) suggests “participation” is primarily a form of representation oriented towards concerns that are external to the location. He says such representations do not speak directly to local practice and provide little clue to implementation.

How to turn “participation” from policy texts into meaningful grassroots practices is another important challenge of community development. NGOs are there to implement policies and serve as bridges between the global and the local. Owing to their funding links they are accountable to international aid agencies and states. At least theoretically, they are also accountable to the rural communities they are supposed to work with, not to mention the host country’s national and local governmental bodies. So this multiple accountability puts them in a conflicted position when it comes to interpreting and acting upon participation discourses. For example, NGO discourses usually take “community” as a homogenous group or recognize only certain major categories like the poor, the

youth, men or women. But in reality there are a lot of grassroots social, cultural, and class dynamics that need to be taken into consideration in talking about voice and participation. Behera (2006) argues, for example, within the category “women,” there are multiple subcategories like literates and illiterates, rich and poor, high and low class, most often mutually non-exclusive, who have multiple, sometimes conflicting identities. He says, “participatory development loses its meaning if such diversities within a category are not given due recognition in the development strategies of rural people” (p. 39).

The model of participatory communication should be based “on dialogue rather than monologue, horizontal rather than vertical information sharing, social rather than individual change, and equitable participation, local ownership and empowerment” (Kincaid & Figueroa, 2009, p. 509). I examined these communication practices in the communities I studied.

### **Research Questions**

Along with the problematics and tensions highlighted above, this study addresses four main research questions:

*Q1: Around what ideographs do development agencies organize their discourses of participatory development? Why these particular ideographs?*

*Q2: How is participatory development enacted in actual community interactions with Oxfam and World Vision staff? Whose voices are heard?*

*Q3: How conducive are the discursive spaces used by/available to NGOs in Ethiopia for promoting the engagement of communities in public deliberations?*

*RQ4: How closely do NGOs’ international discourses of community participation resemble the communication among grassroots development stakeholders in rural Ethiopia?*



### CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

In this chapter I explain the methods used in my study. By “methods” I mean the strategies and procedures I used for collecting and reading discourses, and for opening them to others. I describe the steps I followed in identifying rhetorical artifacts, generating field data, and in analyzing, interpreting and theorizing. I start by outlining the assumptions of the research approach I employ. Then, I provide justifications for using multiple methods grounded in different traditions for the current study. Finally, I specify the procedures used in this study.

Regarding my philosophical assumptions, I embrace the existence of multiple realities and that these realities are socially constructed through rhetoric. I try to understand the realities of the two organizations I am studying and that of the study communities. I do not presume a priori knowledge, for example, about how participation is framed in their discourses and enacted during deliberations over grassroots development. I remained open to learning from the textual analysis and field observations I conducted. I maintain the view that my research should contain an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of participants (Creswell, 2007). Hess (2011) argues rhetorical ethnographers fulfill “multiple roles of researcher, advocate, and observer” (p. 137).

In my research design decisions, I considered potential shortcomings resulting from ways in which my advocacy/participatory stance would affect my description, interpretation and theorization. It is understood that rhetorical criticism actively involves the personality of the researcher. Kuypers (2005) argues, “The very choices of what to study, and how and why to study a rhetorical artifact, are heavily influenced by the

personal qualities of the researcher” (p. 15). Thus, I was self-reflective throughout the research process about my worldviews, my affiliations with the organizations and communities I studied, my scholarly orientations, and how I saw specific situations.

Guided by Michael McGee’s notion of ideographic criticism, I employ, in this study, a mixture of textual criticism and field methods. I used multiple methods of reading discourses first because of the diverse nature of my research questions. For example, research question one – Around what ideographs do Oxfam GB and World Vision organize their discourses of participatory development -- is best suited to the textual analysis of rhetorical artifacts. While question number two -- How is participatory development enacted in actual community interactions with Oxfam and World Vision staff? Whose voices are heard? -- calls for use of ethnographic methods. Foss (2009) sees rhetorical criticism as the systematic study of “symbolic *acts* and *artifacts*” (p. 6) (emphasis is mine). She explains that an act is a performance presented to a live audience while artifact is the transcribed, printed, recorded or preserved version of the act. In my study I will investigate both rhetorical acts and artifacts. So my use of diverse methods, which suit the investigation of both acts and artifacts, are well justified.

Second, my focus is on “reading” organizational rhetoric better, rather than on use of specific methods religiously (Hoffman & Ford, 2010). Zarefsky (2006) argues, “The task has been not to apply a fixed method so much as to illumine the text” (p. 385). Similarly Kuypers (2005) writes, “Rhetorical critics use a variety of ways when examining a particular rhetorical artifact, with some critics even developing their own unique perspective to better examine a rhetorical artifact” (p. 15). This overarching goal guides my choice of methods and the entire research project. I will not try to strictly

adhere to the requirements of a single method of studying rhetoric for “[it] is neither possible nor desirable for criticism to be fixed into a system” (Black, 1965, p. xi).

Mainly, I will use methods of textual analysis associated with rhetorical criticism and methods of participant observation and interviews associated with the ethnographic tradition. The textual analysis will help in highlighting the dimensions of the rhetorical situation, particularly strategies of persuasion and power differentials embedded in the rhetorical artifacts crafted by Oxfam GB and World Vision. The ethnographic approach provides better tools for the study of grassroots “live rhetoric” and vernacular advocacy (Hauser, 1999). Along these lines, Hess (2011) argues, “The dual methodologies [of textual analysis and ethnography] provide rhetorical scholars with an application of rhetorical theory and concepts through the direct observation of and participation with localized discourses and advocacy” (p. 132).

The alliance of rhetorical criticism and ethnography has thrived over the last couple of decades (Conquergood, 1992; Hess, 2011; Middleton, Senda-Cook & Endres, 2011). Current studies in the field of rhetoric indicate that rhetoricians are increasingly adopting ethnographic field methods. Middleton et al. (2011) give a list of rhetoricians who recently used focus groups, participant observations and interviews in their studies. Hess (2011) coined the term “critical-rhetorical ethnography” (p. 127) to show the affinities and conceptual border-crossings between two longstanding traditions in the study of communication. Middleton et al. call such an approach “rhetorical field methods.” Gerzelsky (2004), who draws the critical ethnographers’ attention to figurative language, especially metaphor, calls for the use of “rhetorical ethnography” (p. 73). While some scholars (mostly ethnographers) seem to call for the embedding of rhetoric in

cultural studies (Gaillet, 2004; Gorzelsky, 2004), others suggest incorporating ethnography into rhetorical studies (Hess, 2011; McCormic, 2003; Middleton, Senda-Cook & Endres, 2011).

The one thing widely agreed on is that each discipline will be enriched by employing the other. In this regard, Gaillet (2004) posits that the “cross-fertilization” of rhetorical studies and ethnography “enriches both disciplines and offers fruits for analysis that yield a beautiful harvest” (p. 109). He went on to argue that “the marriage of ethnography and civic rhetoric has the power to transform institutions and communities when ethnographic practice is determined by local exigencies” (p. 109).

Drawing from both rhetorical and qualitative research scholarship, Hess argues that crossing the border of ethnography provides scholars of rhetoric with “a locally situated and experimental approach to the process and production of rhetorical texts” (p. 128). He contends that this method is meant to “give rhetoricians an insider perspective” and equips them to “both evaluate and to enact arguments in service of the vernacular” (p. 128). Similarly, Middleton et al. (2011) claim that “efforts at in situ rhetorical analysis are valuable because they sharpen the ability for CR [critical rhetoric] to engage seriously the voices of marginalized rhetorical communities and mundane discourses that often evade crucial attention” (p. 387). They see the potential for rhetorical field methods “to analyze situations in which meanings depend on places, physical structures, spatial delineations, interactive bodies, and in-the-moment choices” (p. 388). “If ethnographers have enriched their practice with rhetorical insights and methods,” Conquergood (1992) writes, “rhetoricians likewise have much to gain from ethnography, particularly

understanding of the cultural constructedness of key concepts such as ‘reason’ that has characterized rhetoric in the West from Plato to Perelman” (p. 81).

The present study benefits from these “border-crossing” traditions (Cheney, 2000; Krone, 2000). Cheney (2000) identifies “integration,” “crossing,” and “interplay” as ways different paradigms may be related to one another (pp. 38-40). In my study, the paradigms could “speak to one another” in a combination of ways (p. 38). The multiple methods approach I chose to use is in line with the current trends of scope and methodological expansions in rhetorical studies. Rhetorical criticism, which was once limited to pragmatic textual analyses of widely circulated speeches given by prominent speakers, has widened its scope to include critical investigation of “everyday” “live” rhetoric (Middleton et al., 2011, p.387). In the case of Ethiopia, a rhetorical study would be incomplete if it left out “live” rhetoric. It is largely an oral culture where one finds a great deal of undocumented rhetoric.

In this study, I set one foot on traditional textual analysis and the other foot on field study. First, I carried out a textual analysis of organizational discourses created by the UN, the World Bank, Oxfam GB and World Vision at the global and national levels. Then I employed an ethnographic approach to study rhetoric within everyday communication between stakeholders of NGO-initiated development in selected localities in Ethiopia. In what follows, I elaborate on the two main methods I used in this study.

### **Rhetorical Criticism**

Discussions of rhetorical criticism often start with defining the term “rhetoric.” Scholars do this because of commonly held tendency to view “rhetoric” in its pejorative sense as “flowery speech,” “ornamental speech,” and “mere rhetoric”; all of which imply

that rhetoric is empty language without substance. None of these expressions describe how “rhetoric” is used in rhetorical criticism in general and in this study in particular. In this context, rhetoric refers to the strategic use of symbols to communicate meaning to audiences and achieve goals (Foss, 2009; Hoffman & Ford, 2010; Kuypers & King, 2009). Foss explains the three primary dimensions included in her definition: 1) humans are the creators of rhetoric; 2) symbols are the creators of rhetoric; and 3) communication is the purpose of rhetoric. Similarly, Kuypers and King (2009) emphasize that rhetoric involves making intentional language choices to achieve “specifiable goals” (p. 5). It is also important that communicators attempt to persuade their audiences by presenting an idea that “will *probably* be better than another” (p. 7).

In order to explain the persuasive deployment and ideological positioning of <participation> in the discourses of Oxfam GB and World Vision, I employ the method of rhetorical criticism. Foss (2009) defines rhetorical criticism as “a qualitative research method that is designed for the systematic investigation of symbolic acts and artifacts for the purpose of understanding rhetorical process” (p. 6). For Condit and Bates (2009), rhetorical criticism is “the study of ways in which symbolic components of particular discourses shape or constitute beliefs, attitudes, and actions” (p. 109). Kuypers (2005) defines rhetorical criticism as “the systematic process of illuminating and evaluating” rhetorical acts with the purpose of opening the work to others (p. 13).

I carefully selected rhetorical artifacts that represent organizational commitments. These include reports, policy documents, position papers, publicity items, proceedings, and minutes from international headquarters, national offices and field sites of Oxfam GB and World Vision. Once I identified the relevant artifacts I carried out a critical textual

analysis. As a rhetorical critic my task is “to look beneath the surface and between the lines, in order to perceive and explicate” underlying rhetorical dynamics (Zarefsky, 2006, p.385).

The general goals of rhetorical criticism are to understand how discourse works to initiate and sustain changes within the communication environment and to bring about change in the world (Condit & Bates, 2009; Deetz, 2001; Zarefsky, 2006). The changes occur at the conceptual and social levels (Condit & Bates, 2009). At the conceptual level, rhetorical criticism contributes to rhetorical theory. In this regard, this study focuses on unearthing and critiquing ideological positions wrapped in discourses surrounding participatory community development.

In terms of contributing to theorization in rhetoric, the current study gives explanation to how the rhetoric of <participation> has developed and been used in the context of nonprofit organizations with special focus on Oxfam GB and World Vision-initiated grassroots development in Ethiopia. The study offers answers to the four research questions I posed. Admittedly, I am going to theorize about rhetorical phenomena and process in the interactions between NGOs and beneficiary communities in Ethiopia based on investigation of limited artifacts and rhetorical acts. However, I believe the study is a useful contribution given its rare focus on discourses of <participation> in the context of NGOs of Western origin that are operating in the Global South.

There are different approaches to the study of rhetorical criticism. The oldest method of criticism used in modern communication studies is neo-Aristotelian or the neo-classical method of criticism outlined by Herbert A. Wichelns’ 1925 essay, “The Literary

Criticism of Oratory” (Foss, 2009). For Wichelns, rhetorical criticism focuses on, “discovering and appreciating how speakers adapt their ideas to particular audiences” (Burgchardt, 2005, p. 1). Neo-Aristotelian criticism went “unchallenged” as the only method of rhetorical criticism until the 1960s (Foss, p. 22). This framework has been criticized for restricting criticism to the study of effects and rational appeal (disregarding competing values and non-rational appeals) (Burgchardt, 2005; Foss, 2009; Lee, 2005; Wander, 1983). One of the fierce critics of neo-Aristotelian criticism was Edwin Black. In his 1965 book, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Methods*, he demonstrated the inadequacies of the traditional method. Black suggested in his 1970 essay, “The Second Persona,” that we can also discover through the analysis of rhetorical texts what audience is implied by the discourse, as opposed to the fixation of neo-Aristotelian criticism on how discourses are fitted to the rhetorical situation and pre-existing targeted audiences (Burgchardt, 2005). In general, I would say the criticism of the Neo-Aristotelian approach led to the emergence of critical approaches to the study of rhetoric. One of these critical methods of rhetorical criticism is ideological criticism.

The introduction of ideology in rhetorical criticism is commonly known as the “ideological turn in criticism” (Foss, 2005; Lee, 2005). Philip Wander played an important role in emphasizing the role of ideology (Burgchardt, 2005; Lee, 2005). In ideological approach to criticism the focus shifts from surface level, pragmatic analysis to looking beyond the surface structure of an artifact to find out the beliefs, values and assumptions suggested by the messages (Foss, 2009). Lee (2005) argues that critics are dealing with ideology, once they start to ask, “Whose interests are served by these messages that construct this particular version of the truth?” (p. 307). Lee (2005) sees



ideology as “a particular way of looking at the world that is constituted by the relationships between truth, discourse, and power” (p. 308). Foss (2009) defines ideology as “a pattern of beliefs that determines a group’s interpretations of some aspect(s) of the world” (p. 209). According to Lee (2005), ideology is a concept so broadly defined that it becomes difficult to find any discourse that does not fall under this category. He explained that we are interested in ideology when we ask questions like: “To what extent are these ideas true or false? What forces perpetuate these particular ideas? What groups benefit from and what groups are disadvantaged by these ideas?” (p. 307).

Hoffman and Ford (2010) outlined two basic approaches to analyzing organizational rhetoric -- “an evaluative reading approach and a critical reading approach” (p. 104). A critic working from an evaluative approach seeks to assess the rhetoric’s ability to meet its goal. Hoffman and Ford also noted that critics determine effectiveness “by comparing strategies that they found in the artifact with what they have learned about the rhetorical situation” (p. 105). They also make suggestions for how the rhetoric could be more effective. These scholars pointed out that the evaluative approach is rooted in two traditional approaches of rhetorical criticism -- neo-Aristotelian criticism and genre criticism. On the other hand, the critical perspective focused on “what rhetoric reveals about how organizations create and use power” (p. 109). For Hoffman and Ford, critics coming from this angle seek to understand how ideologies are used to gain and maintain power in a society. Critics try to uncover the power implications of discourses. It is this second type of criticism that guides this study. I occasionally reflect on the effectiveness of discourses, but this is not my focus.

## **Ideographic Criticism**

I will use ideological criticism for my study because it allows me to study the ideologies of NGOs, which are wrapped in the discourses of participatory development. I argue that there is ideological baggage attached to the services provided by NGOs operating in Ethiopia. The tenets of ideological criticism allow me to study the connections between “buzzwords” NGOs frequently use (like “participation,” “empowerment” etc) and their ideological commitments. Ideological criticism is a type of criticism that is perfectly in line with my position as an advocate for the marginalized. Wander (1983) argued ideological criticism involves use of good reasoning for “engaging in right actions” and creating “a better world” (p. 111).

At the center of ideographic criticism are terms that are “more pregnant than propositions ever could be” (McGee, 1980, p. 455). McGee calls such terms “ideographs.” According to McGee, an ideograph is an “ordinary-language term found in political discourse. It is a high-order abstraction representing collective commitment to a particular but equivocal and ill-defined normative goal” (p. 455). They are key orienting terms in society. Ideographs are abstract, yet powerful (Lee, 2005). The primary function of ideographs is to justify the exercise of power. Rhetors ask for collective commitment and sacrifice in the name of ideographs (Lee, 2005; McGee, 1980). Examples of ideographs in the American context would include, <equality>, <freedom>, <freedom of speech>, <law and order>, <liberty>, <national security>, <privacy>, <property>, <rule of law>, and <separation of church and state>. Most of these ideographs are shared by the Ethiopian culture, though some such as <privacy>, <property>, <freedom>, and <freedom of speech> are less significant. On the other hand, Ethiopians have other

important ideographs such as <poverty eradication>, <poverty reduction>, <peace and security>, <development>, <terrorism>, and <extremism>. I have organized my ideological criticism around <community participation>, <empowerment>, <poverty reduction>, and other related ideographs used by Oxfam GB and World Vision to legitimate their mode of doing <development> in Ethiopia.

Many rhetorical scholars have used ideographic criticism to explain influential cultural discourses (Cloud, 1990; Ewalt, 2012; Lee, 2009, Lucaites & Condit, 1990). Cloud explained how the <family values> ideograph was used during the 1992 campaigns to make the victims of poverty responsible for social crisis (such as the Los Angeles riots) in America. Lucaites and Condit (1990) carried out a critical analysis of how the <equality> ideograph is used to create uniformity and suppress the question of non-hegemonic group Americans. Similarly Lee (2005) employed ideographic criticism in his reflections on Senator Edward Kennedy's use of <tolerance> in his 1983 "Truth and Tolerance in America" speech.

### **Rhetorical Field Methods**

The second phase of my study employs field methods grounded in ethnographic traditions. Creswell (2007) defines ethnography as "a qualitative design in which the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing group" (p. 68). Braithwaite (1997) asserts, "Ethnography is the best social scientific method to gain access to the communicative life of specific cultures" (p. 222). Since I am interested in the communicative encounters of two communities in Ethiopia with NGO workers, my study qualifies as ethnography. My research communities have a distinct culture and language. Even though limited numbers

of residents in the two research communities directly participate in meetings with Oxfam GB and World Vision, the ones that do interact with these organizations are representatives of their community. I am compelled to use ethnographic methods because “any serious interrogation of ‘community’ requires inquiries into the nature and meaning of communities themselves” (Gaillet, 2004, p. 101).

Providing a holistic description of a cultural unit is a key attribute of ethnography. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), all relevant aspects of a culture are of interest to the ethnographer. Ethnography is characterized by a prolonged engagement of the researcher with a community. In this research, I do not claim to use ethnography in the sense that it is used in anthropology or sociology. I am not interested in the entirety of the culture in my research communities. As a communication scholar, my focus is on symbolic processes and communicative practices within the settings and among the groups I study (Elligson, 2009). I am most interested in how structures are constituted by discourses and how power differentials affect the formation of discourses and communication patterns. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) refer to this as “ethnography of communication” (p. 44). Ethnography of communication draws from heritages of anthropology, sociolinguistics, folklore studies, and semiotics. It “conceptualizes communication as a continuous flow of information, rather than as a segmented exchange of messages” (p. 44). Ethnography in the context of communication studies is concerned with the relationship between symbolic practices and social structure (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Similarly, Stewart and Philipsen (1984) explain:

Ethnography of communication is a [...] term for students of culture who view speech as a culturally variable process and as the medium in which human

association is constituted. Scholars of hermeneutic and ethnography share convictions that communicative meanings are deeply contexted in historical and cultural situations, and that situated communication is not only reproductive but also productive of common meanings. (qtd. Townsend, 2004, p. 179).

Ellingson (2009) argues that communication ethnographers need to be in various sites for the purpose of learning about and assisting in the development, change, or improvement of that site or other related sites. Communication ethnographers are guided by questions like these: “How do communication practices reflect local preferences for its form and content? How do those preferences operate systemically to generalize particular identities and relationships among participants? How do these practices work to constitute general forms of social reality?” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 45).

Creswell (2007) explained that there are many forms of ethnography. Among these, he discussed two types: realist and critical ethnography. Realist ethnography is the traditional ethnographic approach that aims at capturing an objective account of the situation and reporting objectively on the information learned from participants at a site. I carried out a critical ethnography. According to Creswell, it is a type of ethnographic research in which the authors advocate for the emancipation of groups marginalized in society. Unlike the conventional ethnographers, critical ethnographers have the responsibility “to address processes of unfairness or injustice within a particular lived domain” (Madison, 2005, p. 5). As a rhetorically trained participant observer, I employed critical ethnography, first, to bring to light hidden issues of power and control in the interactions among rural development stakeholders and, second, to offer theoretical insights and make suggestions that will improve participation of the marginalized. I

crossed methodological borders as I tried to see with a critical lens the tensions and fragmentations within communicative practices between stakeholders. The ethnographic part of my study paid close attention to specific nuances of grassroots deliberations among rural-development stakeholders.

Hess (2011) suggests that critical-rhetorical ethnographers utilize tools of data collection common in the qualitative tradition such as participant observation and conventional interviewing. This study employed participant observation and interviews as methods of field data collection.

### **Participant Observation**

I observed the interactions between NGO workers and the Ethiopian communities they serve to understand grassroots communicative practices. Participant observation involves going to the research sites, respecting the daily lives of individuals at the site, and collecting a wide range of materials (Creswell, 2007).

Once I identified Oxfam GB and World Vision as case organizations, I contacted both organizations and secured their consent to visit their national and field offices in Ethiopia and observe their interaction with the respective communities they are serving. Among several area development programs both NGOs have in Ethiopia, I chose two districts in consultation with my contact persons from these NGOs. I considered cultural distinctiveness of the communities, duration of service of the NGOs to the communities, the magnitude of ongoing projects and activities, and accessibility of the districts and convenience for me.

I carried out the fieldwork in Ethiopia from the first week of September until the end of November, 2012. My three-months of fieldwork was fairly divided among the

two target research communities. Staying for about six weeks at each site, I did a participant observation of deliberative events between the NGO workers, the communities they serve, and local government representatives. The events included planning workshops, project beneficiary selection, and regular saving and credit association meetings. I stayed in a World Vision staff residence camp for five weeks. This gave me the opportunity to spend prolonged time with the staffs and understand their mode of operation. I ate with them in the staff cafeteria, shared office space with two development facilitators, engaged in leisure activities, and learned a lot about their work. My knowledge of World Vision's organizational culture helped a lot. Since Oxfam did not have staff residence in my research locality, I had to stay in a hotel. Still I spent most of my time in the field with the Oxfam field worker.

Among the different roles of the observer, I first maintained the role of participant as complete observer (non-participant-observer) position (Creswell, 2007; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Studying “participation,” I did not want to remain a non-participant observer. At the later stages of my fieldwork, I took part in the practices I came to observe in order to gain a greater understanding (Braithwaite, 1997; Gibson & Brown, 2006). My involvement was limited to documenting, recording minutes and giving support upon the request of organizers or participants. I participated in staff meetings and raised questions that helped me further clarify insights gained during observations. I made sure my participation did not in any way compromise my taking unstructured field notes at the research sites.

My experiences working with grassroots communities in Ethiopia, my knowledge of deliberative practices of the communities under study, and my training in rhetoric

definitely helped in planning well, capturing critical moments and making effective use of time in the field. I speak fluently the two languages spoken in my research communities—Afaan Oromo and Amharic. Additionally, I have five years of NGO experience, working as a field communication practitioner. I understand how grassroots development works in Ethiopia, specifically, and within the NGO sector, generally.

I am aware of the potential harm my biases might cause to the findings of the study. I admit that I am a pro-poor, social change-oriented communication scholar. I am passionate about rural communities and development initiatives aimed at making poor people's lives better. I have a deep desire to see the poor residents have a stronger voice on issues that matter to them. As I pointed out in previous sections, my theoretical view on participation of the poor in public deliberations is very much informed by postcolonial theory and thinkers like Foucault, Freire and Habermas who Creswell (2009) identifies as advocacy/participatory-oriented scholars along with Marx, Adorno, and Marcuse. I strictly observed ethical standards of research and maintained my critical reading position. My research protocols were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I did not collect data in the communities I previously worked with in order to minimize personal bias.

During the field observation, I recorded my experience with scratch notes, which were expanded to extensive reflections upon my return from each event. My notes included not only detailed descriptions of how discussions, if any, were conducted but also a critical reflection on the participants' understanding of "community participation" and how it was enacted during a particular rhetorical situation. Hess (2011) argues, "critical-rhetorical ethnographers should pay close attention to the moment, time, and



space of speaking” (p. 142). He further remarks that field notes should record the argumentation scene by asking questions such as, “what is going on here?” among others.

To analyze data collected through participant observation, I used Kenneth Burke's Dramatistic Method, which offers a logical approach to understanding human motives. The pentadic framework is used by critical researchers to analyze human motivation as embedded in symbolic actions. In chapter five, I will further explain what pentadic analysis provides to my study.

### **In-depth Interviews**

I interviewed a purposive sample of informants from community members to NGO workers to key informants/scholars in the field. Hess (2011) argues, “As explorations into the cultural kairos and invention of the organization, interviews provide the critical-rhetorical ethnographer with firsthand and immediate interpretive accounts of how the message is received” (p. 142). I conducted both ethnographic and key informant interviews. The ethnographic interviews were conversational or situational conversations, which provided the opportunity to follow through with what the participant observation captures (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). The “stand-alone” informant interviews were used to illicit information from organizational insiders (those who are engaged in policy-making and crafting messages) and community opinion leaders (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

The interviews were guided by two separate interview protocols. Interviews with community members were directed at the effect of NGOs’ organizational rhetoric. For example, I asked participants about the similarities and differences between collaboration as it is traditionally conceived in their community and the way it is being used in their collaboration with Oxfam GB or World Vision. I asked who is more powerful in setting

the rules for participation. When it comes to questions directed at the NGO workers, I asked participants to talk about invention of discourses surrounding “community participation,” organizational norms for democracy, and deliberations with community members.

All interviews were face-to-face and in the first language of interviewees. I asked a series of semi-structured open-ended questions. This allowed for flexibility and adaptation of wording appropriate for specific study areas (Gibson & Brown, 2006). According to Gibson and Brown, this approach also makes it possible to better engage participants by being sensitive to the natural flow of conversation by not sticking to any particular order of presenting the questions. I have interviewed 64 local community members, NGO workers, government officials and scholars in the field. Although participants were purposely selected the voice of every development stakeholder is included in the study.

### **Procedures for the Analysis of Ideographs**

Guided by McGee’s theory of ideographic criticism, I followed three steps in doing rhetorical analysis: 1) identification of ideographs, 2) the construction of ideographic clusters, and 3) the interpretation of the clusters by mapping of discursive shifts and illuminating important changes in ideology (Lee, 2005; McGee, 1980; Walts, 2006).

As discussed in the previous sections, I gathered two types of data to understand the rhetoric of “participatory development” discourses and identify ideographs. First, I generated data through textual analysis of public discourses surrounding participatory development. I tried to gain insights into the types of messages that Oxfam GB and

World Vision disseminate with focus on identification of the major ideographs around which they organize their messages and actions. Second, I organized, transcribed (audios), and sorted field data. Then I read through the data and tried to make sense of them. Next, I looked for key words and phrases that capture the ideology of the users. Ideographs are easy to identify since we encounter them daily in the media, in the school classroom, and in “everyday conversation” (Lee, 2005, p. 317). Ideographs, writes McGee (1980), “exist in real discourse, functioning clearly and evidently as agents of political consciousness. They are not invented by observers” (p. 456).

Ideographic criticism goes beyond identifying the ideographs. Ideographs do not exist in a vacuum. A rhetorical critic has to describe the historical context in which the ideograph functioned and the contractions and expansion in meaning across time. Once I identified all possible ideographs in the discourse of my case organizations, I did a diachronic or vertical study of the ideographs connecting those ideographs with their historical roots and showing how meanings evolved over time. The diachronic analysis helps me to understand the ideographs’ historical implications (McGee, 1980). “Awareness of the way an ideograph can be meaningful *now*,” McGee argues, “is controlled in large part by what it meant *then*” (p.459). As a result, I analyzed discourses of participatory development situating them in historical contexts.

The second step involved putting the ideographs into clusters. Clustering of ideographs becomes important because “an ideograph is always understood in relationship to another” (McGee, p. 461). At this stage, I mapped the terms “radiating from the slogans originally used to rationalize” an ideology (McGee, p.461).

Finally, I made a critical analysis by way of giving detailed descriptions and showing different functions of clusters of the slogans through synchronic relationships with other ideographs. This step constitutes the bulk of the work for this dissertation. In addition, this step establishes the dominant ideologies present within the discourses of the case organizations and communities. I extensively dealt with the constitutive roles of discourses and their role in justifying subsequent actions.

In the preceding chapters, I explained the importance of my research topic, the theoretical frame I chose, and my methods of study. In addition, I have reviewed literature relevant to my topic with the aim of mapping the theoretical and practical contexts and indicating the potential contributions of my study. I detail my findings in the next three chapters.

#### CHAPTER 4: <COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION> AS AN IDEOGRAPH

This chapter answers research question number one: *Around what ideographs do development agencies organize their discourses of participatory development? Why these particular ideographs?* The chapter has three parts. In the first part, I trace the origins of the <community participation> ideograph in the post-World War II discourses of international development. To this end, I study “community participation” as it is used mainly in key texts generated by the United Nations and the World Bank since 1950. Of all the international agencies of development, I chose to focus on the discourses of the UN and the World Bank because these two organizations have had the strongest ties to NGOs (Ahmed & Potter, 2006; Hewitt, 2000). They were also the key organizations that promoted the idea of <community participation> in grassroots development.

In the second part of the chapter, I analyze Oxfam and World Vision's rhetoric of <community participation> in the last three decades. Most of the NGOs, as we know them today, were born in large numbers and became important actors of international development in the age of globalization. According to Feeney (1998), NGOs based in industrialized countries grew from, 600 in 1980 to 22,970 in 1993. In developing countries, too, there has been an "explosion" in the number of NGOs (Feeney, 1998, p. 25). These were also the decades in which donor agencies recognized NGOs as allies in international development and started to work with them.

In the third part, I examine the Ethiopian government's rhetoric of <community participation>. The state is an important stakeholder in national development. The rhetorical interaction between Western agencies and political discourse in Ethiopia will provide a fuller picture of the discursive landscape. This analysis partly addresses

research question number three: *How conducive are the discursive spaces used by/available to NGOs in Ethiopia for promoting the engagement of communities in public deliberations?* I explain how the Ethiopian government frames <development>, <participation>, and related concepts by analyzing a sample of relevant texts from the database of the Ethiopian News Agency.

As stated in chapter three, I follow a three-step approach in doing ideographic criticism. First, I identify key ideographs around which development agents wrapped their discourses of participatory development. Second, I situate the ideographs in the specific historical context in which they functioned while also studying continuities or changes in meaning across time. With the aim of establishing the contexts in which the <community participation> ideograph has been used, I give a brief historical account of the focus of international development at different times after World War II. Finally, I put ideographs, at each period, in clusters to better understand the tensions among their meanings and critically reflect on the different functions they serve.

In this chapter, I study <community participation> and other related ideographs as they are used in the context of development. Hettne (1995) contends, "Development is one of the oldest and most powerful of all Western ideas" (p. 29). Chambers (1989) argues, "Historically the fashions for ideologies, packages, and programmes in rural development have changed" (p. 1). Thus, it is necessary to backup and see the different ways development has been conceptualized at different times. To begin with, the meaning of "development" is as varied as that of "community participation." I agree with Thomas (2000) that development "embodies competing political aims and social values and contrasting theories of social change." In most cases, it is defined in terms of national

average economic indicators of progress. Some other critical scholars see development as a "hoax" introduced to allow the industrialized North, especially the USA, "to continue its dominance of the rest of the world in order to maintain its own high standards of living" (Thomas, 2000, p. 19). While I am cognizant of the fact that there are situations where the term "development" can be used not as an ideograph, I argue that its ideographic use serves the purposes of legitimizing Western ideology and policies of international relations. For example, Bernstein (2000) argues <development> was used during the colonial period to justify the intervention of European colonial powers in Africa and Asia. He explains that developmental notions were wrapped in discourses of a "civilizing mission," which ranged from the creation of law and order to the building of infrastructure and communications, to the introduction of Western education and medicine, and the gradual formation of new values. According to Bernstein (2000), "colonialism in sub-Saharan Africa was thus marked by a more intensive and comprehensive series of interventions to promote development" (p. 268). Therefore, it is important to note that there was a clear connection between <development> and colonialism.

Chambers (1997) defines <development> in a simple way as "good change." I know for sure that Ethiopia needs this kind of development, for there are many things that should change for the better. I also understand even this definition may not be simple enough. "Good" in whose eyes? "What are the objects of change and how are they to be altered?" are some possible questions to ask. But it is not my intention to go into further detail here. In what follows, I highlight the dominant ideologies within the discourses of

development in the last 60 years. Later, I explain how certain “ideographs” are given the task of carrying these ideologies.

### **Dominant Ideologies in “the Era of International Development”**

President Harry Truman's inaugural address on January 20, 1949 marks the beginning of what is considered the era of international development (Thomas, 2000). He reiterated that the nation faced "grave uncertainty" during a period that would be "eventful, perhaps decisive, for us and for the world." This period was marked by tensions between democracy and what he called the "false philosophy" of communism, "a regime with contrary aims and a totally different concept of life." "In the coming years," the President made clear, "our program for peace and freedom will emphasize four major courses of action." These are:

First, we will continue to give unfaltering support to the United Nations and related agencies, and we will continue to search for ways to strengthen their authority and increase their effectiveness. We believe that the United Nations will be strengthened by the new nations which are being formed in lands now advancing toward self-government under democratic principles. Second, we will continue our programs for world economic recovery... Third, we will strengthen freedom-loving nations against the dangers of aggression... Fourth, we must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas.

Truman's speech came as a response to the Cold War situation where the two superpowers, the USA and the USSR, "vied with each other for influence over the newly



independent, ex-colonial countries of the South" (Thomas, 2000, p. 6). Mansuri and Rao (2013) argue, "In the context of the Cold War, community development was seen as a means of protecting newly independent states against the dual threats of external military aggression and internal subversion. Perhaps the most important motive was to provide a democratic alternative to Communism" (p. 25).

<Colonialism> and <communism> were the major exigencies that called forth a type of development rhetoric that would be appealing to people in poor nations.

<Community participation> became a dominant commitment in development to counter the devil terms of <colonialism>, <exploitation>, <modernization> and <communism>. For example, President Truman appeared to have <colonialism> and <modernization> in mind when he argued that his administration would not "impose" itself on other nations but aimed to "help the free peoples of the world, through their own efforts, to produce more food, more clothing, and more materials for housing." He underlined, "The old imperialism—exploitation for foreign profit—has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of democratic fair-dealing."

The Bretton Woods institutions became key players in international development in the postwar period. They injected large-scale resources into developing countries with the hope that the economies of the recipient countries would grow. Despite their contributions, Hewitt (2000) argues, financial institutions like the World Bank and IMF were "disproportionately favourable to the continued dominant position in the world economy of ... countries" (Hewitt, 2000, p. 291). Some analysts hold Bretton Woods accountable for discourses that overemphasized the value of technical knowledge as a

solution for world poverty (Easterly, 2013). The central argument of Easterly's book, *Tyranny of Experts*, is that:

The conventional approach to economic development, to making poor countries rich, is based on a technocratic illusion: the belief that poverty is a purely technical problem amenable to such technical solutions as fertilizers, antibiotics, or nutritional supplements. We see this in the [World] Bank's action's in Mubende; we will see the same belief prevalent amongst others who combat global poverty such as the Gates Foundation, the United Nations, the US and UK aid agencies. (p. 6)

Easterly (2013) starts his volume by telling a story of how a British company "financed and promoted" by the World Bank was going to grow forests (in Mubende District, Uganda). According to Easterly, the company's work on the ground caused forest fires that burned down the barns and homes of a neighborhood and killed one eight-year-old child. The story is an extreme example of how technocratic approaches to development can be wrong and how consulting local communities could have been better.

The 1950s and 1960s were characterized by the need for rapid industrialization of developing countries (Hewitt, 2000). National governments were believed to be the major development actors (Chambers, 1989). Owing to the economic boom in the developed world, agencies like the World Bank were able to support large-scale development initiatives in the underdeveloped world. The underlying assumption was that Western-style modernity, achieved through economic growth, was the way forward (Hewitt, 2000). On the other hand, the need for reconstruction in Africa, following the disintegration of imperial regimes, put development on top of the agenda for nations

freed from the yoke of colonialism. According to Chambers (1989), there were widespread efforts to implement donor-supported rural development projects in sub-Saharan Africa. It was during this period that the West (mainly the USA) funded large-scale agricultural development units in different parts of Ethiopia. Ambitious plans during this period seemed to have paid off. Technological and skills transfers, in addition to financing, resulted in economic growth in many developing countries, albeit in varying degrees. The growth period did not last long. "By the 1970s, the idea of international development both as an ideal and as an economic fact had become severely undermined" (Hewitt, 2000, p. 296). According to Hewitt (2000), the 1970s saw a shift from economic "growth-at-all costs" towards "an emphasis on employment and redistribution with growth" (p. 296). Developing countries borrowed large sums of money from international financial institutions, mainly the World Bank and the IMF. Debt-led "growth" resulted in a debt crisis. Structural adjustment programs required by Bretton Woods were considered the way out of the crisis. However, there seemed to be no easy fix. Debt crises and inflation continued. Many of the poorest countries of the world in the sub-Saharan region got poorer in the 1980s (Hewitt, 2000).

One of the leading thinkers about rural development and participation, Robert Chambers (1989) calls the 1980s "the decade of efficiency" (p. 4). Since the 1980s, neo-liberalism, with its emphasis on market mechanisms, became the dominant way of thinking about development (Hewitt, 2000; Thomas, 2000). Major international actors defined indicators of poverty reduction (development) in economic terms. For example, the World Bank introduced a single poverty line for the whole world. The Bank considered an income of less than US\$1 per day as extreme poverty. The other widely

used indicator of development is GDP, which is a technical term for the "total final output of goods and services produced by an economy" (the World Bank qtd. in Thomas, 2000, p. 11). Such national average measures of development are problematic as they can obscure the poverty situation of individuals and minority groups. Even more important for the current study is that the rhetoric of gross national economic figures could be used to silence grassroots voices. Emphasis on measurable economic progress is a noteworthy point because it provides the basis for my arguments about the inherent tension between the rhetoric of efficiency and the rhetoric of participation.

Development aid, which had been flowing to developing nations since the 1960s, started to decline in the 1980s (Hewitt, 2000). Chambers (1989) explains why both the "more government" policies of the 1970s and "less government" approaches of the 1980s failed to bring solutions to the problems of development:

Both ideologies and both sets of prescriptions, embody a planner's core, center-outwards, top-down view of rural development. They start with economies not people; with the macro not the micro; with the view from the office not the view from the field; and in consequence their prescriptions tend to be uniform, standard and from universal application. (p. 6).

The post-World War II interventionist rhetoric of development, which was started by President Truman's speech, continues to the present day with slight changes in focus by different agents of international development. Thomas (2000) argues that capitalistic interventionism sees the need for international development to "ameliorate the distorted faults of progress" (p. 28).

In the 1990s the neoliberal agenda began to diminish (Thomas, 2000). The promotion of “democracy” and “good governance” was the major shift in the development paradigm. Thomas argues, "Markets are still seen as the most efficient mechanism for economic growth, whilst states play an 'enabling role' and NGOs provide welfare services to those that are not reached by markets" (p. 305). During this period, Thomas contends, liberal democracy presented itself as the only basis for development since socialism lost the battle.

Although the capitalistic rhetoric of development has been dominant, there are those who reject capitalism and look for alternative modes of invention (Thomas, 2000). According to Thomas, such attempts include looking for some form of socialism, which does not depend on the state. Such options go by different names like “another development,” “alternative development,” or “people-centered development.” The people-centered versions of development are guided by three principles: justice, sustainability and inclusiveness (Thomas, 2000). Thomas contends "participation" was later recognized as another important political condition for authentic development.

In the preceding section, we have seen how "development" has been at the center of North-South relationships for a half century. While <development> remains the ideograph the West has used to legitimize various types of interventions in developing countries, the ideology underlying <development> efforts has changed. That <development> has remained at the center of all the models and ideologies that appeared to be dominant at various times shows how important this ideograph has been. Whereas <development> provides a context and reason for discourses of <community participation>, "participatory" is often used to indicate a certain type of approach to

<development>. Notwithstanding the ideological tensions surrounding discourses of <community participation> at any moment and the changes over time, I argue, in the subsequent parts of the chapter, that the organizations under study have often used the rhetoric of community <participation> to mask their practices of "manufacturing consent" and to legitimate their <efficiency> driven mode of doing development. I shall also argue that NGOs employ such rhetoric to impress international donors and get funding for their programs. I will start my argument by charting the <community participation> rhetoric of the World Bank and the United Nations. I do this not only because diachronic analysis is an aspect of ideographic criticism, but also because "ideologies emerge from historical events and therefore are evident only in historical view" (Cloud, 1998, p. 382). Once the global rhetorical situation is established, it becomes easier to see how discourses diffuse from more powerful organizations to implementing agencies.

### **Global Agencies' Rhetoric of <Community Participation> in <Development>**

Mansuri and Rao (2013) credit Bretton Woods and the USAID as institutions which helped drive the first wave of interest in participatory development in the 1950s and 1960s by funding and promoting community-based development. Eade (2004) explained the role of these international agencies in inventing the ideographs around which the notions of participatory development are wrapped:

Remarkably, it has taken only 60 years or so for DevelopmentSpeak, a peculiar dialect of English, to become the *lingua franca* of the International Development Industry. Its pundits inhabit all the major institutions of global governance, the World Bank—as benefits its role as the world's Knowledge Bank—taking the lead in shaping the lexicon: burying outmoded jargon, authorizing new terminology

and permissible slippage, and indeed generating a constant supply of must-use terms and catchphrases. Its speakers are found in all corners of the world, giving local inflections to the core concepts, thus making the adoption of Developmentspeak an essential qualification for entry into the Industry. The extraordinary thing about Developmentspeak is that it is simultaneously descriptive and normative, concrete and yet aspirational, intuitive and clunkily pedestrian, capable of expressing and most deeply held convictions or of being simply “full of sound and fury signifying nothing.” This very elasticity makes it almost the ideal post-modern medium even as it embodies a modernising agenda. (pp. viii-ix)

Eade’s description of “Developmentspeak” is actually about ideographs. He understands ideographs (“Developmentspeak”) as ordinary language terms, representing a normative goal. He also explains how they are culture-bound and how membership into a community requires individuals to be conditioned to these terms. Eade nicely explains that these “must use,” “simultaneously descriptive and normative” “terms and catchphrases” are found in “all corners of the world” with “local inflections to the core concepts.” While they can be “pedestrian,” these terms are “capable of expressing and most deeply held convictions or of being simply full of sound and fury signifying nothing” (pp. viii-ix). This description of “Developmentspeak” is, by and large, consistent with Michael McGee’s portrayal of ideographs.

In the 1980s, participation became a United Nations’ theme and, as a consequence, a UN inter-agency Panel on People’s participation was set up in 1982 (Chambers, 2005). According to Hickey and Mohan (2004), other proponents of

participation from the 1980s to the present day include the World Bank, NGOs, development professionals and Robert Chambers. The focus in the 1980s was on participation in projects rather than in broader political communities (Hickey & Mohan, 2004). With the emergence of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in the early 1990s, donors showed renewed interest in actively funding participatory approaches, with the aim of ensuring minimal levels of investment while protecting the most vulnerable community groups. Mansuri and Rao (2013) contend, “over the last decade, the World Bank has allocated almost \$85 billion to local participatory development. Other development agencies—bilateral donors and regional development banks—have probably spent at least as much” (p. 15). The policy interest and the processes of participation, Mansuri and Rao argue, have been “driven more by ideology and optimism than by systematic analysis, either theoretical or empirical” (p. 15).

The NGO Working Group at the World Bank advocated for bottom-up approaches to development (Long, 2001). As part of its effort, Long explains, an international conference on popular participation was jointly organized by NGOs and the UN Economic Commission for Africa in 1990 in Arusha, Tanzania. According to Long, the purpose of the conference was “to call attention to the essential truth that people must be integrally involved in their own development” (p. 1). The conference produced the African Charter on Popular Participation, which, in the words of Long, “stands as perhaps the best expression of popular participation” (p. 1). The World Bank, other UN agencies and major donors, such as USAID, the British Department for International Development (DFID), German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the Swedish International



Development Cooperation Authority (SIDA) among others, launched participatory development initiatives.

In what follows, I take a close look at selected United Nations and the World Bank rhetorical texts to identify the ideographs around which these organizations organize their discourses of community participation. I do this in order to investigate the meanings of these ideographs and the purposes they serve.

### **<Community participation> Rhetoric of the United Nations**

The United Nations was founded in 1945 by 51 countries committed to “maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards and human rights.” Today the organization has 193 member states. Although best known for peacekeeping, peace building, conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance, there are many other ways the UN and its System (specialized agencies, funds and programs) strive to “make the world a better place.” Sustainable development, promotion of democracy, and human rights protection are among the many areas in which the organization is engaged.

Since the United Nation was founded in the aftermath of World War II, its mission focused on global peacekeeping and conflict resolution. Thus, we do not see foundational documents of the UN like the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights making direct mention of “community participation.” The word “democracy” is not even mentioned in the UN Charter. The UN is not explicit about the notion of democracy and participation because it is a membership organization of all kinds of nations, including dictatorial regimes (Rich & Newman, 2004). This, however, does not mean that the UN has no interest in democracy and democratic values

such as participation. Rich and Newman (2004) argue that the UN was aware of the role democracy plays in achieving peace, security, respect for human rights and prosperity in the world. To support their argument, they borrowed the idea of democratic peace theory, which claims “democracies do not engage in armed conflict with other democracies.” They also made a point in support of the relationship between democracy and development. They cited Nobel laureate Amartya Sen who claims a country becomes “fit [for economic and social development] through democracy.”

I agree with Rich and Newman (2006) that the UN has promoted democratic values because these values serve its interests. UN documents have some articles that are indirectly connected to democratic participation. For example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights contains articles that are, one way or another, related to the right of community members to participate in development and other issues that matter to them. These articles include the right to freedom of thought (Art. 18), the right to freedom of opinion and expression (Art. 19), the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association (Art. 20) and the right to participate in the cultural life of the community (Art. 27).

Midgley (2011) traces the origins of the discourse of community participation to the United Nations' concept of "popular participation." According to Medgley, Western democratic theory, populism and the community movement of the 1950s and 1960s had considerable influence on the discourse of community development. Medgely observes that the United Nations and the American government had key roles in the refinement of community development ideas. When it comes to community participation, though, Medgely (2011) gives the biggest credit to the United Nations. While he is aware that

several historical antecedents provide a source of inspiration for the current discourse of community participation, he argues "its emergence as a coherent approach must be seen as a direct consequence of the United Nations' popular participation programme" (p. 177). Then, through the influence of international agencies, many countries and NGOs took up the idea (Medgely, 2011).

Beyond key UN documents, we see "community participation" used in publications and speeches posted on the official website of the United Nations ([www.un.org](http://www.un.org)). For example, UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, noted in 2009, "We have learned the importance of building local capacity, focusing on the needs of women and the poorest, community participation, and accountability and transparency." Similarly, in a Declaration by participants at The World Summit of Sustainable Development (2002, South Africa), they affirmed, "We recognize that sustainable development requires a long-term perspective and broad-based participation in policy formulation, decision-making and implementation at all levels."

A focused search of the phrase "community participation" in the texts posted on the official website of the UN generated 959 mentions. The UN used the phrase less frequently than the World Bank, because this website only archives files from the UN Secretariat Office. When a search is carried out on texts from individual grassroots focused agencies of the UN family, the frequency with which "community participation" occurs in texts is higher (e.g., FAO = 6,770 & UNICEF = 1053).

One of the most important UN documents on participation is the African Charter of Popular Participation in Development. The charter was an outcome of a five-day international conference organized under the auspices of the United Nations in Arusha,

Tanzania in February 1990. Over 500 people from the UN system, African states, NGOs, the international community and grassroots organizations and associations attended the conference. The aim of the conference, among others, was: a) to recognize the role of people's participation in Africa's recovery and development efforts, and b) identify obstacles to people's participation in development and define appropriate approaches to the promotion of popular participation in policy formulation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development programs. In what follows, I take this important document as a representative case and study its use of <popular participation>.

Establishing the rationale for participation, the Charter (1990) describes the economic, human, legal, political and social crisis "engulfing Africa" and affirms:

Nations cannot be built without the popular support and full participation of the people, nor can the economic crisis be resolved and the human and economic conditions improved without the full and effective contribution, creativity and popular enthusiasm of the vast majority of the people. After all, it is to the people that the very benefits of development should and must accrue. (p.4)

Thus, the widespread economic, humanitarian and social crisis in Africa was used as a justification for adopting participatory approaches to development. On the one hand, the rhetoric emphasizes that people should be involved as they are the end users of the benefits of development works. On the other hand, the rhetoric of popular participation appears to justify the "full and effective contribution" of citizens and their "creativity."

The question here is whether many African nations provide the deliberative space and freedom to their citizens to be creative. In many cases, others decide how and to what end people should participate.

According to the Charter, popular participation is, in essence, “the empowerment of the people to effectively involve themselves in creating the structures and in designing policies and programmes that serve the interests of all as well as to effectively contribute to the development process and share equitably in its benefits.” Like many other discourses, the UN conference participants clearly point to citizen’s rights and potential to take part in all aspects of development, including “charting their development policies”:

We, therefore, have no doubt that at the heart of Africa’s development objectives must lie the ultimate and overriding goal of human-centered development that ensures the overall well-being of the people through sustained improvement in their living standards and the full and effective participation of the people in charting their development policies, programmes and processes and contributing to their realization. (p.5)

In the rhetoric, <popular participation> warrants the involvement of citizens in all stages of development. The Charter also emphasizes the central role of the people and their popular organizations in the realization of popular participation. The Charter demands that people should take the initiative, in addition to getting fully involved in projects others initiate. We shall see in subsequent chapters if the reality on the ground supports these rhetorical claims.

The conference participants realized the need to “emphasize self-reliance on the one hand” and, on the other hand, “to empower the people to determine the direction and content of development, and to effectively contribute to the enhancement of production and productivity that are required.” In this construction, people are not in a position to

control the how and what of development. By implication, there are others who have made such important decisions. Once communities get empowered, then they will be able to push back and have their voices heard.

Participants at the international conference clearly indicated their position on the conceptual distinction between "participation as a means" and "participation as an end":

In our sincere view, popular participation is both a means and an end. As an instrument of development, popular participation provides the driving force for collective commitment for the determination of people-based development processes and willingness by the people to undertake sacrifices and expend their social energies for its execution. As an end in itself, popular participation is the fundamental right of the people to fully and effectively participate in the determination of the decisions which affect their lives at all levels and at all times.

I have rarely seen participation described as “the fundamental right of the people.” Not only does this Charter try to strike a good balance between the means and end functions but also is cautious about how it describes the means part of the equation. For example, the Charter indicates that the participation of the people should aim at “collective commitment for people-based development process.” “Willingness of the people,” according to the Charter, should be the basis of participation.

The Charter demands that African governments “yield space to the people” since popular participation is “dependent on the nature of the state.” This is a very important point we do not see emphasized in discourses originating from the West. Participants pointed out freedom of expression should be guaranteed. The Charter also demands that the international community “examine its own record on popular participation, and

hereafter ... support indigenous efforts which promote the emergence of a democratic environment and facilitate the people's effective participation and empowerment in the political life of their countries." The conference participants seem to have realized the negative role that the international community, including NGO, has had in imposing itself on communities and not always supporting indigenous efforts.

### **<Community Participation> Rhetoric of the World Bank**

The World Bank is one of the independent specialized agencies of the United Nations. Some people refer to the Bank as "the financial wing of the UN." The mission of the World Bank is "sustainable poverty reduction" around the world. According to the Bank, "poverty encompasses lack of opportunities (including capabilities), lack of voice and representation, and vulnerability to shocks." The fact that poverty is defined in terms of lack of voice justifies <community participation> as a better approach to development. The Bank argues that indigenous communities have been "on the losing end of development":

In many cases, their resources have been exploited for the benefit of other groups in society and, in many countries, they are the poorest of the poor. Often they experience political and economic discrimination and are perceived as backward or primitive. Even when development policies and programs have been designed specifically to improve the welfare of indigenous peoples, the approach has usually been paternalistic, seeking their cultural assimilation and ignoring the strengths of indigenous institutions and knowledge (including environmental knowledge). This, in turn, can contribute to worsening poverty, social marginalization and ethnic resistance.

This discourse, and others like it, criticize the past to provide a rationale for advancing the anti-colonial counter discourse of “community participation.” It is in the interest of the Bank to support community participation initiatives because “paternalistic” approaches “contribute to worsening poverty.”

The Bank considers itself in a “unique partnership,” offering technical and developmental assistance to developing countries in addition to providing “low-interest loans, interest-free credits, and grants.” Since its inception in 1944, reconstruction has been an important part of the Bank’s work. “However, at today's World Bank, poverty reduction through an inclusive and sustainable globalization remains the overarching goal of our work” (Website, the World Bank Group).

In the mid-1980s, the Bank realized that poverty would not be reduced by focusing on “economic, financial and technical” aspects while paying “little attention” to the social aspects of development. Thus, they embarked on addressing social issues including enhancing community participation. Bamberger (1986) summarized the reasons that led the Bank to take community participation seriously:

Several factors have contributed to an increasing recognition of the need to social aspects of development. First is the accumulating evidence about the effects that beneficiary participation in project design and management have on the efficiency of implementation, cost recovery, and project sustainability. Second is the limited capacity of national and local government agencies to manage effectively the increasing number of development projects and programs. Third is the belief that development planners have a moral obligation to “listen to the people,” both to understand their needs and to assess how their lives are actually being affected by



donor-sponsored projects and policies. A final factor is the concern over gender issues. Women are not to make their full contribution or receive their full share of benefits unless projects are designed to take into account the special needs and potentials of women. (p. vii)

The World Bank not only recognized the values of community participation itself but also used its financial leverage to push the agenda of participation. In a policy of the Bank, “consultations and participation” was listed as one of the conditions for development funding eligibility:

In carrying out dialogue with borrowing countries, the Bank advises them to consult with and engage the participation of key stakeholders in the country in the process of formulating the country’s development strategies. For a development policy operation, the country draws on this process of strategy formulation to determine, in the context of its constitutional and legislative framework, the form and extent of consultations and participation in preparing, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating the operation. Bank staff describes in the Program Document the country’s arrangements for consultations and participation relevant to the operation, and the outcomes of the participatory process adopted in formulating the country’s development strategy. (Development Policy of Lending, the World Bank)

<Community participation> is a commonplace phrase in World Bank texts. A focused search of the phrase in the official website of the World Bank (<http://www.worldbank.org>) is indicative of the wide public usage of the ideograph. My first search under the “publications” section of the website resulted in 12, 505 mentions

in several texts (as of May 2, 2014) using the phrase “community participation.” The chart in appendix H in the appendix summarize the incidence of “community participation” in the texts posted on the website. I reduced the number of artifacts to look closely at the 86 with “community participation” in their title. I did this with the assumption that such texts are more focused on “community participation” and hence would provide a better venue to see the use of the phrase as an ideograph. In my investigation of the ideograph <community participation> I paid more attention to the bank’s key global policies, position papers and studies rather than texts about specific countries or projects. Almost all the publications I chose to scrutinize were labeled “Public Disclosure Authorized,” which suggests that these discourses have been circulated among a wide range of audiences.

The subsequent discussion is based on a close reading of the <community participation> ideograph, which appeared in Bank discourses from the 1980s to the present period. In addition to World Bank’s publications, I read hundreds of pages of commentaries, articles and books focusing on the bank’s policies of social development and the use of <community participation> over the years. I organized my analysis of the discourses under the major objectives of community participation identified by the World Bank (Paul, 1987). These are empowerment, building beneficiary capacity, increasing project effectiveness, improving project efficiency, and project cost sharing. Paul (1987) posits, “of the five objectives of CP, cost sharing, project efficiency and project effectiveness were dominant in the projects reviewed” (p. v).

**Promotion of democratic rights.** Even if it was not explicitly stated as one of the objectives, an overriding theme in <community participation> discourses is the

promotion of democracy. For example, the title of a January 2009 article by the bank, “FOR THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE: Community Participation, Voice and Representation,” mimics the popular motto of democracy. The Bank assumed that citizens in developing countries had little or no chance to hold discussions on issues that matter to them. That is why the Bank required countries to liberalize as a condition for loan and grant qualification. In its “Indigenous Peoples” policy, the World Bank states that the development process should fully respect “the dignity, human rights, economies, and cultures of Indigenous Peoples.” The Bank also makes it clear that it provides financial assistance for initiatives designed to make the development process more inclusive of Indigenous Peoples by incorporating their perspectives in the design of development programs and poverty reduction strategies. The Bank’s rhetoric seems to favor partners that provide communities with opportunities for free and informed consultation.

At least at the surface level, <participation> is used ideographically to warrant the inclusion of the voices of “the community” in the decision-making process. The World Bank supports participatory development because “the poorest of the poor” often experience political and economic discrimination and are “perceived as backward or primitive.” The World Bank also uses discourses of <community participation> to further argue that communities should be allowed to guide the development process to match their own needs and priorities. In its widely circulated newsletter, “Social Development Notes,” the Bank (1995) explains:

The characteristics of indigenous groups make participatory approaches especially critical to safeguarding their interests in the development process. Such

approaches, recognizing the right of indigenous peoples to participate actively in planning their own futures, are supported by major donors and international organizations, including the World Bank, but have proved very difficult to implement. (Note number 8, p. 1)

The World Bank and other donors use the <rights> of indigenous people as one reason for supporting participatory approaches. In no text did I see the World Bank argue in opposition to the democratic ideals of representation and all-inclusiveness. It is not surprising that an organization largely financed by democratic nations embraces a core concept of liberal democracy—citizen participation. A related concept commonly found in Bank narratives is “open development.” Bottom-up approaches to development and feedback from grassroots stakeholders, according to the Bank, are important ways of ensuring transparency and accountability.

In this case, the Bank’s discourses of <community participation> justify deliberative decision-making as an ideal in which it is worth investing. Participation is held as a goal rather than a means to an end. For example, the Bank’s Vice-President for sustainable development argued in 1995, “the essence of sustainable development is helping people make their own decision and take responsibility for their own welfare.”

**Beneficiary <empowerment> and <capacity building>.** According to the World Bank (2002), "Empowerment means increasing poor people’s access and control over resources and decisions by changing the nature of the relationship between poor people and state and non-state actors" (p.10). In most cases the word "empowerment" was used with <the poor>. Searching for the phrase "empowering the poor" in the official website of the World Bank, I found the phrase was used 149 times between 1996 and 2013. If I

were to consider the variants of empowering like "empower" and "empowerment," the frequency could have gone higher.

Paul (1987) argues, "While references to effectiveness, efficiency and cost-sharing as objectives of CP are made in Bank's policy documents, empowerment and capacity building have received much less attention" (p. v). "Empowerment and capacity building emerged as relatively less important objectives in the Bank projects" (Paul, 1987, p. vi).

The ideographs <participation>, <capacity building>, and <empowerment> form a cluster. They all concern improving the situation of the poor. When the poor participate in development decision-making, it is assumed they are empowered and their capacity to negotiate increases. On the flip side, empowered citizens whose communicative and technical capacities have been developed are believed to participate better and get their voices heard. Even though not explicitly stated, the underlying assumption is that democratization takes place when empowered citizens participate in the process.

**<Effective>, <sustainable> and <efficient> development.** These ideographs appear to cluster around the concepts of investment and cost-benefit analysis. In the World Bank Groups' discourses this set of ideographs justify engaging communities in development albeit in the form of making labor and financial contributions. The Bank considers projects "effective" when there is efficient use of limited resources. World Bank manual writer, Gopal (1995) notes:

Experience has shown that the active and informed participation of disadvantaged communities in the design and implementation of social sector projects can contribute significantly to the *sustainability* of development activities through

increased community ownership, strengthening of the legitimacy of community institutions, and to the more *effective* use of grassroots facilities and services (emphasis is mine). (p. 1)

Similarly, the World Bank argues participatory approaches to development “increase the likelihood that communities will be at the forefront” of interventions “ultimately leading to more effective and efficient” operations. Citizen participation in “decision-making” is, for the Bank, a way of producing “more efficient and effective delivery of services.” This might be right, but the question is to what extent citizens participate in the decision-making process. My field study results will help describe the practices on the ground.

In conclusion, the World Bank has embraced a participatory approach to development and urged its partners to do likewise. Former president of the Bank, James Wolfensohn (1996), notes, “I personally believe in the relevance of participatory approaches and partnerships in development and am committed to making them a way of doing business in the Bank.” However, the way participation was understood within the Bank has changed over time. A senior official with the Bank observes, “While initially, community participation was limited to provision of voluntary labor by communities, or participation of non-governmental organizations in capacity building exercises, it now actively involves communities in the design and implementation of projects.”

### **NGOs' Rhetoric of <Community Participation>**

As partners with both the World Bank and the UN, NGOs link the global with the local. While NGOs represent the private, civil society sector, the UN and the World Bank are inter-state agencies. Thus, NGOs are not directly accountable to these inter-state

agencies. Yet, strategic interests strongly connect them. For example, the World Bank has been collaborating with NGOs since the early 1980s. NGOs are important to the Bank "because of the skills and expertise they bring to emergency relief and development activities and because they foster participatory development processes" (The World Bank, 1999, p. vii). Feeney (1998) argues, "Funding NGOs enables donors to achieve two aims simultaneously: to minimise the direct role of governments in the economy, and to provide services in a cost-effective way" (p. 25). According to Feeney (1998), NGOs receive about 10 percent of total bilateral aid.

In addition, the Bank explains that it "encourages" borrowers and its staff members to consult with and involve NGOs as appropriate in Bank-supported activities, including all stages of the project cycle. Even though the Bank is primarily a lender, grants are an integral part of its development work and services. "The Bank's main objectives in extending grants are to encourage innovation, catalyze partnerships, and broaden the scope of Bank services"(1999, p. 1).

The relationship between NGOs and the UN has gone through various stages. The formal recognition of the relationship was expressed in the concept of "consultative status" in Article 71 of the UN Charter. Explaining why NGOs are important to the UN, Smith (2006) points out:

NGOs often work hard at building and maintaining their reputation, since it is the perceived quality of their information that can provide them with access and influence in the political bodies of intergovernmental organizations. In addition many NGOs have an operational or service function that brings them into close

contact with both the people they are trying to help and the field staff of the UN and other IGOs [International NGOs]. (p. 116)

Smith (2006) also observes, “it is clear that there are many reasons that NGOs would desire to be active participants in the global dance of UN politics” (p. 116). Two of these reasons could be: 1) getting the chance to partake in “global dance” and influence global resolutions passed by the UN and, 2) getting resources necessary to implement humanitarian and development programs in the field. The UN-NGO partnerships are based on UN agencies and programs providing resources to NGOs, which in turn contribute to the success (or failure) of the work undertaken by the UN. Since the UN gets to choose which NGOs to partner with, NGOs must compete for UN assistance. They do this by demonstrating their expertise and documenting their relationships they have with grassroots communities (Smith, 2006).

NGOs not only adopted participatory development rhetoric early on but also were instrumental in promoting the participation of poor and marginalized people in project decision-making (Log, 2001; Mansuri and Rao, 2013). In the words of Midgley (2011), “Non-governmental organizations have also been major promoters of community participation ideals” (p. 179). In what follows, I examine selected texts from both Oxfam and World Vision to learn about their community participation rhetoric.

### **Oxfam's <Community Participation> Rhetoric**

Like many other global actors, Oxfam is fond of the phrase “community participation.” A focused search in the official website of Oxfam GB resulted in 188 texts with the phrase “community participation” in them (there could be multiple mention of the phrase in each text). In my investigation of the ideograph <community participation>,



I paid the most attention to Oxfam's mission, values, "constitution," policy documents, and thirteen years of annual reports (2001-2013). Almost all the publications are available to the public.

The subsequent analysis of the <community participation> ideograph is based on Oxfam discourses in the last three decades. In addition to the texts produced by Oxfam, I looked at some photos and graphics posted on the website of the organization. I did that with the view of shedding light on the visual rhetoric of Oxfam. I identify the major ideographs that justify the discourses of participatory development. Then I put these ideographs into clusters and discuss the relationships among them.

Oxfam describes itself as a global movement of people working towards a world without poverty. The mantra of the organization is "lifting lives for good." In their mission statement, they state, "We respond fast in emergencies, and stay to help people rebuild their lives. We work on long-term projects with communities determined to shape a better future for themselves. And we campaign for genuine, lasting change." Oxfam's vision is "a just world without poverty." According to a statement on their website, the organization envisions "*a world in which people can influence decisions which affect their lives, enjoy their rights, and assume their responsibilities as full citizens of a world in which all human beings are valued and treated equally.*" Thus, the idea of participation features in a short, usually carefully thought about and worded vision statement, which is the best expression, one can find, about the intent of an organization. The organization clearly indicates that the purpose of community participation is "influencing decisions which affect their lives." This is a very important indicator against which practices of "participatory approaches" can be measured.

In an Oxfam publication, Feeney (1998) defines participation as "an opportunity for citizens and public and private organizations to express their opinions on general policy goals or to have their priorities and needs integrated into decisions made about specific projects and programmes" (p. 10). She explains that participation allows particularly poor communities a chance to "discuss development plans" with representatives of government and donor agencies. Thus, in Oxfam's rhetoric participation is mostly about deliberating over plans and making decisions. It is about communities bringing concerns and alternative ideas and negotiating plans.

From the beginning, Oxfam acknowledges that people in poverty have the desire and capacity to change their situation. Oxfam's vision statement implies that there are circumstances in which people cannot influence the decisions that affect their lives. This exigency calls forth the rhetoric of community participation.

Whether we are running life-saving emergency responses, life-changing development projects or campaigning at the grassroots to tackle poverty, Oxfam's work is always rooted in a vision of a world where women and men are valued and treated equally, able to influence the decisions that affect their lives and meet their responsibilities as full citizens. Oxfam's 6 goals put local communities and the voices of poor people at the centre of change - our best hope for ending the injustice of poverty. (Oxfam GB website-Goals and Values)

Oxfam claims to help people realize their potentials by way of empowering them and making sure they "feel they can make change happen." Truly believing in the capacity of the people to contribute and to change their own lives is a huge step in engaging communities. As one of their values, Oxfam staff proclaims, "We're a world

expert in providing water and sanitation, and emergency response... We know a thing or two about long-term development and tackling the causes of poverty too.” There is no doubt <expertise> was mainly conceived as modern education. Graduate caps provided the visual on Oxfam’s website to explain expertise (see visual and description below).



We're a world expert in providing water and sanitation, and emergency response. In 2010/11 alone, generous public donations helped us reach 6.5

We will later see the tensions that arise between <participation> and <expertise>. Another noteworthy point here is that Oxfam understands poverty as resulting from “injustice.” This framing has significant implications for participatory approaches to development. It implies that dealing with unjust power relationships is a necessary condition, for the provision of resources alone may not result in a better life for the poor. While Oxfam recognizes the structural nature of the causes of poverty, it also appears to point its finger toward governments, donors and other agencies of development.

### **<Community Participation> and <Empowerment> as <Rights>**

Oxfam underscores that participation is the right of communities, not a privilege. For Oxfam, “participation is not simply a way of making aid more effective, but an essential prerequisite for recognizing and safeguarding fundamental rights.” Oxfam says, “We are helping people to claim rights for themselves, the right to be heard.” Communities are supposed to <participate> in development because it is their <right>. Oxfam justifies the need to actively involve people in development decision-making on

the grounds of rights and the power of communities to make change happen. Oxfam says, “With the power of the people against poverty, we can solve this poverty puzzle.” Ruling out the voices of communities is “unjust” and costly for the effort to produce better results on the ground.



Caption: We can end poverty and injustice by mobilizing the power of people against poverty.

We see a close relationship between these two ideographs-<participation> and <rights>. <Rights> justifies community <participation>. In this case, participation is considered more of an end rather than a mean of achieving development. As a pro-poor, advocacy NGO, Oxfam puts “rights” at the center of its rhetoric in favor of community participation. Their practice aside, we see some element of “participation as a means” rhetoric in their use of <efficiency>, <effectiveness> and <sustainability> to justify <community participation> (also see the visual rhetoric below).



Caption: Oxfam works with partners on long-term programs to eradicate poverty and injustice



A visual used to explain Oxfam's value of "collaboration"

Another ideograph that falls in the same cluster with <rights> is <empowerment>. According to the way Oxfam frames its arguments, communities claim their <rights> when they are empowered. Thus, active engagement of communities in deliberations requires citizens equipped with the necessary skills of public deliberation. By

implication, it is not possible to simply recognize participation as the right of communities and not do something that helps communities fight for their rights. One aspect of <empowerment> is providing communities with information. Oxfam recognizes that “effective participation requires access to information---held by public authorities or donors, or even by private companies.” Oxfam is cognizant of the fact that unequal access to information leads to unequal power. In addition to information, community members need the skills necessary to negotiate and experience getting their views across. To this end, Oxfam aims “to build local skills and experience, so communities can be in control of their own lives.”

### **World Vision's Rhetoric of <Community Participation>**

In the case of World Vision, too, I purposely focused on texts that describe organizational identity, core principles, policies and philosophies of development. In addition, I reviewed 13 years of widely circulated, annual reports of the organization (2000-2012) and hundreds of pages of reports and commentaries about the organization and its approaches to development. I found relevant discourses by running a specialized search of “community participation.” A search of the World Vision International website revealed 108 documents in which the phrase “community participation” appears at least once.

World Vision identifies itself as a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. Explaining their first core value, they write, "We are Christian." Jesus is "central" to their "individual and corporate life."

His identification with the poor, the afflicted, the oppressed, the marginalized; in His special concern for children; in His respect for the dignity bestowed by God on women equally with men; in His challenge to unjust attitudes and systems; in His call to share resources with each other; in His love for all people without discrimination or conditions; in His offer of new life through faith in Him. From Him we derive our holistic understanding of the gospel of the Kingdom of God, which forms the basis of our response to human need. We hear His call to servanthood and see the example of His life. We commit ourselves to a servant spirit permeating the organization. We know this means facing honestly our own pride, sin, and failure. We bear witness to the redemption offered only through faith in Jesus Christ. The staff we engage are equipped by belief and practice to bear this witness. We will maintain our identity as Christian while being sensitive to the diverse contexts in which we express that identity.

World Vision staff members strongly identify themselves with Jesus and vow to follow His example. They use a rhetorical strategy of building their development philosophy and approaches around Jesus's teachings and deeds. The founder of World Vision, evangelist Bob Pierce, is credited with saying, "Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God." When I was interviewing some World Vision personnel, I observed that some of them were tapping into this practice of identifying with the supernatural to sustain their rhetoric of "doing good, be it in community development, [it] is natural for us as we try to emulate the examples of the perfect God."

It is the staff's "holistic understanding" of the gospel "which forms the basis of" their "response to human need." No matter what it takes, they are determined to commit

themselves to "a servant spirit" and respond to Jesus's call. Thus, they are "committed to the poor," not just as a matter of principle but because it is their spiritual calling. Given the high moral ground spirituality has for many audiences, such framing of the response to the needs of the poor as a "spiritual duty" may be a persuasive approach (Henkel & Stirrat, 2001). This kind of organizational rhetoric presents participatory development as part of the rhetors' identity. When a person says, "I am this and this is part of who I am," then there is limited room for others to examine the intent of the speaker. Thus, the rhetoric of identification with the just might obscure the gap between the belief and practice of development agents.

<Jesus> justifies World Vision's commitment to <justice> and working "alongside the poor towards fullness of life." Unlike Oxfam and other secular organizations, for World Vision "fullness of life" includes "the discovery of eternal hope in Jesus Christ." Thus, the staff finds it important to witness their Christian faith to communities. In the process of transformative deliberations, they rhetorically position themselves as facilitators of engagements between "the poor and the affluent":

We seek to facilitate an engagement between the poor and the affluent that opens both to transformation. We respect the poor as active participants, not passive recipients, in this relationship. They are people from whom others may learn and receive, as well as give. The need for transformation is common to all. Together we share a quest for justice, peace, reconciliation, and healing in a broken world.

(World Vision International Website--Values)

World Vision stresses the need for the poor to be "active participants, not passive recipients." The organization's rhetoric also maintains that the outcome of participatory



development has to be <transformative>. For example, one of the key commitments of the organization is the "Transformational Development Policy." In this policy, World Vision affirms that the first indicator of transformation is "community participation." Quoting its mission statement, the organization claims, "community participation is central to World Vision's pursuit of '*transformational development that is community based and sustainable, focused especially on the needs of children*'" (emphasis in the original text).

World Vision's use of the adjective "transformational" qualifies what kind of development is significant. A former World Vision official, now turned professor, Myers (2011) explains how Christian "transformational development" differs from traditional "development." According to Myers (2011), transformational development reflects, "seeking positive change in the whole of human life materially, socially, psychologically and spiritually." Myers stays away from the traditional term "development" because it is "heavily loaded with past meaning, not all of which is positive." He explains that when most people think of development, "they think of material change or social change in the material world." He also notes, "development is a term that many understand as a synonym for Westernization or modernization" (p. 3).

For World Vision, "Community participation means that men, women, boys and girls perceive that they actively participate in all aspects of their development, with particular focus on programme planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation." World Vision (1998) observes:

The 1990s was the decade when participatory development became mainstream, with an explosion of participatory methods across countries and sectors, and the adoption of policies on participation at all levels by governments, donors and agencies, both on rural development projects and beyond to the larger issues of

policy and governance. The growing importance of participation, as well as its complexity and the challenges involved are acknowledged by many development agencies, both secular and Christian...World Vision's experiences of community participation parallel this, through the 1990s move to Area Development Programmes (ADPs). Its inclusion as one of WV's core Transformational Development Indicators will reinforce this. (p. 1).

Earlier, we have seen how World Vision constructed good development principles as Christian virtues, germane to the staff's identity. But this passage seems to suggest that World Vision adopted the participatory approaches to development following the rhetoric of the 1990s.

### **Expertise vs. Participation Tensions: A Clash of Rationalities**

<Community participation> rhetoric obscures the tension between participation and expertise. On the surface, NGO rhetors recognize that citizens have the right and capacity to fully participate in development undertakings. There are some indications that the rhetoric of economic development, especially at the grassroots level, inherently privileges expertise. Modern economic development is grounded in scientific rationality, which is in tension with communicative rationality. Experts usually make decisions on strategic directions and citizens are called on to provide window dressing. This modernization rhetoric was in harmony with the vested interest of elites, who were gaining more power over local communities and their way of knowing (Curtis, 2001 in N&W, p. 115). <Modernization> aimed at diffusing innovations from where it existed (the West) to where it was scarce (under developed nations). In participatory approaches the manner in which participants reach a decision becomes more important than the

decision itself. Some people argue experts are threatened when communities are empowered and participate fully. Experts are said to lose power as “the technocratic approach to development” gets challenged (Easterly, 2013). According to Easterly, technocrats (experts) have a “misconception” of proposing “technical solutions” to every problem the poor have. He observes, “the technocratic illusion is that poverty results from a shortage of expertise, whereas poverty is really about a shortage of rights” (p.7). When citizens truly participate, they not only bring alternative solutions to the table but also use their rights to reject the propositions of the experts.

The tensions between “expertise” and “community participation” were revealed in the 1960s and 1970s because of the much despised top-down “diffusion of innovations.” What the ideograph <community participation> enables development agents to do is reverse the top-down approaches to a bottom-up approach to development. Theoretically, the flip side is supposed to have implications for the power of the experts and of course, of citizens. The discourses of community participation promise that differences will be bracketed and there will be open negotiations. Experts are promising to put their expertise on par with communities’ indigenous knowledge. Open deliberation is supposed to be a mechanism to reach at the winning ideas. Whether that is the case in reality is what I explore in the field data analysis.

The tension between expertise and participation exemplifies the clash between communicative and scientific rationality. There is an inherent tension among strategic, utilitarian and participatory approaches to development. While the former presupposes one objective reality and sees communication as just a means of expressing beliefs and intentions, the latter (participatory) approach presupposes multiple realities and favors

intersubjective, open communication that leads participants to reach tentative conclusions. Discourses of community participation have obscured these important philosophical tensions. While the rhetoric of NGOs emphasize some variant of communicative action, the practices (as we shall see in chapters five and six) lean toward achieving strategic goals via utilitarian approaches.

<Community participation> was the ideograph that offered NGOs and other development agencies a return to the ideal way of doing development by critiquing top-down approaches. While repudiating the traditional top-down approaches to development to justify their current redeeming modes of doing development, organizations tend to adopt the rhetorical strategy of claiming, "we are the champions of current approaches." We do not see them indicate as to who should take responsibilities for the approaches that did not work in the past. The rhetoric blames the methods rather than those organizations that promoted "wrong" approaches. In a way, lack of <community participation> was used to obscure the complexity and multi-faceted nature of why past development efforts did not succeed.

In offering a new style of development, NGOs' <community participation> rhetoric construct messages that convey there are no issues of power currently in their relationship with the communities with which they work. I argue that the ideograph offers a venue of discursive struggle between the colonial, top-down development approaches in the past and the promised decolonized, democratic space of deliberation. While the rhetoric succeeded in vilifying the past and making promised of fresh start, they understate the question of what is happening in regards to engaging communities in policy discussions.

Project <effectiveness>, <efficiency>, <empowerment> and <sustainability> are offered as the possible outcomes of <community participation>. For example, World Vision observed, "a culture of participation empowers families and whole communities to influence and shape their situation, through coalition and networks at local, national, regional and global levels" (p. 119). Changes with political culture and democracy rarely get mentioned as long term impacts of <community participation> in the discourses of Oxfam and The World Bank. The United Nations and World Vision made almost no mention of these terms although they might have implied these concepts while using ideographs like <justice> and <rights>.

In the preceding discussions, three themes stand out: (a) the diachronic development of the ideograph <community participation>, (b) the various synchronic clusters around the ideograph, and (c) the continuity/discontinuity among the international discourses on <community participation> (UN, World Bank, and NGOs). I summarize these three themes in diagram 1 below.

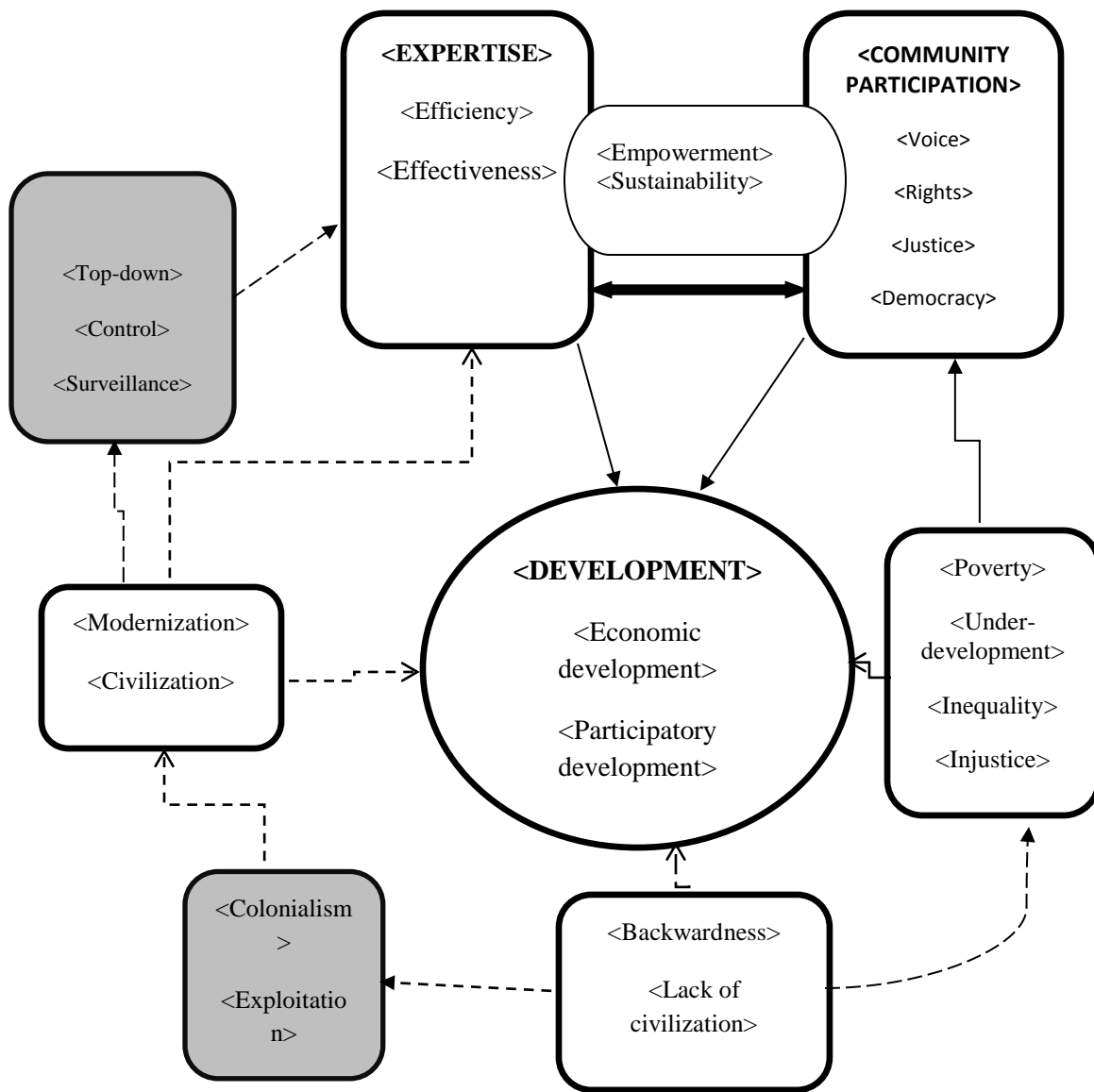


Diagram 1: Diachronic and synchronic relationships between ideographs clustering around <development>

NB: Each unit (oval or rounded rectangle shape) represents a cluster. Ideographs in a cluster are strongly related to one another. Arrows represent ideographic routes.

While one directional arrow shows the direction of change in the ideographic cluster used

to justify/allow actions, two directional arrows show tensions between ideographic clusters. Bigger arrows show major tensions (the central idea of my arguments). Normal (unbroken) lines show continuity of relationship while broken lines represent discontinuity.

In what follows, I will shed light on the <community participation> rhetoric of the Ethiopian government. I observe the discourses of the Ethiopian government as providing context to my main line of analysis of the global-NGO-community interactions. I decided to look at the Ethiopian governments' discourses because the interactions between the global and the local do not happen in a vacuum. Although this study chooses not to follow the global-national-grassroots route and give greater emphasis to the national discourses, the analysis below makes the study more sophisticated.

### **Ethiopian Government's Rhetoric of <Community Participation>**

One purpose of my research is to see whether the participatory development discourses of selected global agencies influence the language and practices of NGOs and grassroots communities. Thus far, I have not paid particular attention to an important stakeholder in development—the governments of donor and recipient nations. Nevertheless, Ethiopian political discourse has not been immune from the influence of the <community participation> rhetoric of Western agencies. The Ethiopian media are a good source of data on government policy. I sampled news stories from the database of the Ethiopian News Agency (ENA), the official news agency of the government for more than 70 years. ENA is the nation's most important producer of news stories. All government-owned media outlets receive news dispatches from ENA. There has never been an independent-television station in the country. Except for two entertainment-

focused FM stations, all other wider-reach, radio stations are either government or party-owned. Given such a media landscape, ENA's stories closely reflect government positions.

I examined stories written in English in the years 2006-2008. These are the years during which Ethiopian political discourses changed significantly their emphasis from "democratic state" to "developmental state." According to postelection reports of international observers (e.g. The European Union and The Carter Center), the country's national elections were relatively free but they concluded with controversial<sup>6</sup> results that allowed the ruling party to stay in power. Since this time, officials have rhetorically redefined Ethiopia as an economic development-oriented country, which was following the examples of China and other eastern Asian Tiger economies. Official rhetoric pursued a strategy of downplaying <democracy> and grounding the root causes of national problems in <poverty>. <Poverty>, which "endanger[ed] the very survival of the nation," warranted ignoring <democracy> and focusing on <economic development>. For example, a government official is quoted as arguing that <community participation> is needed "to reduce poverty":

---

<sup>6</sup> In its Ethiopia's historic May 2005 observation final report, The Carter Center (2009) concludes, "the 2005 electoral process did not fulfill Ethiopia's obligations to ensure the exercise of political rights and freedoms necessary for genuinely democratic elections" (p. 3). According to the Center, a peaceful election day was followed by "flawed counting and tabulation processes in many areas; repeated incidents of serious postelection violence, including the killing of many dozens of people during electoral protests." The European Commission was more critical of the election outcomes that resulted in violent protests and killings. A commission mandated by the Ethiopian Parliament to investigate the situation reported that 193 citizens, including seven police officers were killed.



Deputy administrator of the Woreda Zenebe Mandefiro on his part said the community in the Woreda is celebrating the millennium and May 28 victory day because they have benefited from the political, social and development achievements. He said the woreda administration is implementing development and good governance programs with active community participation with a view to reduce poverty. (ENA, May 8, 2008)

Thus, the 2006-2008 news stories provide a window through which to study the ideological tensions surrounding the rhetoric of <development>, <democracy>, and <community participation>.

I chose a maximum of three development stories from an average of 14 national stories produced each day. I looked at the headline and sometimes the lead of each story and decided if the news story was relatively more development-focused than others. For example, if there were six development-stories out of 13 total stories in a day, I took the most relevant three (e.g., the story got selected if it had the word "participation" in it). If there was no relevant story in a given day, I decided not to take any from that particular day. Using this procedure, I collected 1295 single-spaced pages of text (a total of 2855 news stories). In addition, I examined civics textbooks commissioned for Ethiopian high school students. In what follows, I present my observations and arguments supported by exemplar quotations.

### **<Community Participation> Versus <Public Participation>**

As opposed to the popular phrase "community participation" in Western discourses, <public participation> is the preferred equivalent in ENA-generated passages. While a word search showed only one instance of <community participation>, it

generated 59 instances of <public participation>. In my view, "community" is a relatively new terminology in Ethiopian discourses. Traditionally, communities were addressed using names originating from specific linguistic groups (e.g., the Oromo, Amhara, Gurage, etc.), clans (e.g., Borena, Karayu, Bacho), and locality (e.g., Gojame, Arusi, Sidamo, Wolaita, etc.). A search for the word "community" alone generated a 125 instances. "Community" apparently is a popular Western word replacing traditional Ethiopian vocabulary. For example, the following passage from a ninth-grade civics and ethical education textbook (Mehari et. al., 2011) provides a good example of how Western names are replacing traditional terms:

People live together in villages, towns and cities. They form different associations like Iddir, Mahiber, or kebele to make life better. Members who belong to such associations form a community. Such associations survive because of the work of the members of the community. This is called *community participation*.

*Community participation* is focused on actions that have an economic, political, and social impact. You belong to your school as a student. You also belong to the kebele as a resident. You might also belong to a football team as a player, and to a HIV/AIDS club as a member. These are different communities requiring different activities. Your membership of these communities must not be only for membership's sake. You need to be active in your class to learn and achieve a lot. Unless you are active in your football team your kebele too, you have to do a lot with you. In your kebele too, you have to do a lot with others for the good of all residents. This is also called *active community participation*. When you participate actively in the community, you and other members of the community

will all benefit. When everybody takes part, healthy relations exist among members of the community. Community projects are for the common good (my emphasis). (p. 141)

The Ethiopian civics textbooks for grades 9-12 contain a chapter entitled, "Active Community Participation." In an informal conversation, one of the textbook writers told me the project was influenced by Western discourses. The values that needed to be covered were selected with the help of Western experts who provided support to the Ministry of Education. The British trained the textbook writers. They followed examples from Western citizenship education textbooks. Apart from similarity with Western naming (community participation), the content of the textbooks help to instill democratic values. The chapters cover political participation, which means "being prepared to vote, lobby, persuade, or protest," social participation ("acting to help development"), and civic participation ("actions outside of politics, military, etc."). The textbooks also include chapters on effective leadership and grassroots organizing.

Other than in this case of Western-expertise inspired civics textbooks, the ideograph <public participation> is more popular than <community participation> in Ethiopia. I argue the choice of words may be explained by the differences in political histories of countries/regions. Western rhetoric's privileging of the local (e.g., the small town myth, the myth of community in American politics) could be the reason to choose "community" in the USA. In Ethiopia, the <popular revolution> ideograph was extensively used in the mid 1970s to mobilize protests against Emperor Haile Selassie's feudal regime. The incoming military Dergue continued to use <popular> and <revolution> because they helped promote socialist ideology. These ideographs were also

used to take actions, including massacre of <reactionaries>. It is important to note ideographs can be (ab)used to warrant even the harshest actions. The Dergue killed sixty high-ranking officials of the toppled Haile Selassie regime and would tell Ethiopians (in the news), "The public, revolutionary Dergue has today took measure on 60 anti-revolutionary forces." Such mass killings happened several times, all in the name of protecting the <public> interest and the <revolution>. The word <revolution> was so popular that many parents named their children "*Abiot*" ("revolution" in the Ethiopian national language) because government discourse persuaded them to believe it was something good, whatever it was supposed to mean.

### **<Public Participation> Versus Forced Contributions**

Variations in naming aside, the discourses of <participation> in the Ethiopian public sphere emphasized mobilizing the wider public to make material, labor and financial contributions for <development>. A close look at the following excerpts from ENA news stories provides a sense of <community participation> framing in Ethiopian national discourses:

- 1) Various development works carried out in Gimbichu Woreda, East Shoa Zone of Oromia State, at a cost of over 1.2 million Birr<sup>7</sup> were inaugurated on Saturday. The projects, which were carried out through public participation include the sinking of four clean water wells, construction of five latrines and irrigation canals. (September 22, 2008)
- 2) Roads covering 680 kms and 1,143 additional classrooms were constructed along with development of several springs. The public has contributed about 11.7

---

<sup>7</sup> Birr is the name of the Ethiopian currency. One US dollar is approximately 20 Ethiopian Birr.

million Birr worth of labor and material support for the construction of the facilities. It has also contributed more than 1.5 million Birr cash support. The head said that the office has plans to execute 26 million Birr worth of development projects through public participation in the current Ethiopian fiscal year. (January 26, 2007)

3) 50 alternative basic education centers established at a cost of 1.3 million Birr secured from UNICEF and public participation were providing service. (June 4, 2006)

4) Over 2,400-km gravel roads in Gedeo Zone of the South Ethiopia Peoples' State were constructed and maintained through public participation during the past budget year, the zonal rural road office said. (August 12, 2006\

5) Some 17 new primary schools were built at a cost of 7.5 million birr in Bale Zone of Oromia State during the past academic year the zonal education department said. Department plan and program head, Yale Beje told Ethiopian News Agency on Monday 4.4 million Birr have been contributed from the community, while the balance was provided by the government. (August 4, 2006)

These stories have two common themes: citizen "participation" and "making contributions" (labor, money or material). In most cases these contributions are not made voluntarily, though the news stories chose not to say anything about the mechanisms of pulling together, albeit ironic, large amount of resources from poor communities. For example, ENA reported on September 13, 2008, "one million people in 24 woredas of Illuababor Zone, Oromia State have carried out various development projects valued at 7.6 million Birr during the past four months. It is not clear, at least from the story, how

the zone, in which I was born, managed to make about 1% of the country's citizens "participate". That a public official "plans to execute 26 million Birr worth development projects through public participation in the current Ethiopian fiscal year" (case 2 above) is indicative of the involuntary nature of "participation." If "participation" is supposed to be voluntary, it is difficult to specify exactly how much public <participation> will occur.

In the name of <participation>, I remember every adult male in my neighborhood was required to take turns "safeguard[ing] the revolution." It involved people getting bundled up with warm clothes, carrying canes/sticks and walking around in groups (with one gun-carrying militia man) one night a month to protect their assigned neighborhoods from people with suspicious behaviors. It was the time when several underground groups were organizing resistance against the military regime. In the name of female and youth <participation>, citizens were forced to provide free services like growing and manually processing food for the military at war with Somalia. Whoever fails to <participate> ends up paying fines or gets imprisoned. The ideographs <participation>, <revolution>, and <development> were used to warrant all sorts of political action, including the denial of individual rights.

### **<Development> Versus <Democracy>**

The word "democracy" rarely appears in the national discourses of Ethiopia in the three years following the landmark 2005 national elections. A word search generated 10 uses of "democracy" (versus 4468 instances of "development") in a 1295-page dataset. Two mentions of "democracy" resulted from a newspaper name (*Abiotawi democracy*). In the other eight cases, "democracy" was used as a concept, which appeared in the same

sentence as "development." Every single time, "development" appeared before "democracy" as we see in the following excerpts:

1) After inaugurating the facilities, Chief of the zonal administration Agegnehu Teshager said the social facilities constructed by the government and public budget are a result of good governance, *development* and *democracy* (my emphasis). (June 11, 2007).

2) Farmers should further enhance their involvement in the efforts being made to speed up *development* and ensure peace and *democracy*, said Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development [Mr. Addisu Legesse] (my emphasis). (November 16, 2008)

The coupling of the words "development" and "democracy" is not a coincidence. The order points to the current ideological position and policy priorities of the government.

The ideographs <development> and <participation> are in ideological tension in Ethiopia. I am positive that <democracy> was much more frequent in the discourses prior and during the 2005 national elections. Why would <democracy> become so rare in public sphere? Has prioritizing <development> been used to deny <democracy>? If that is the case, it is something different from discourses of the West—"democracy and development are friends." Researchers from the field of political science, development studies and economics have done extensive studies about the relationship between regime type and economic development (Chan, 2002; Easterly, 2013; Przeworski et. al., 1992). I believe rhetorical criticism can further this line of inquiry by studying how the ideological battles might be built around ideographs.

In conclusion, the discourses of the development agencies I examined all maintain that communities should participate in development mainly by way of contributing ideas, negotiating plans and making joint decisions. Above all, the one promise the ideograph <community participation> offers to the poor is the chance to make their voices heard. While the organizations under study allow communities to attend meetings, they mainly use the <community participation> rhetoric to require communities to make a contribution of financial worth. The organizations want to organize these meetings possibly to mobilize support or impress donors and also to achieve <efficiency> and <effectiveness>

The rhetoric of <community participation> is too compelling to refute. Critics of the rhetoric usually point out the discrepancies between the rhetoric and practices on the ground. We will see the practice side of the equation in chapters five and six. In chapter seven, I will put the rhetoric and practices in conversation with one another.



## **CHAPTER 5: TENSIONS IN GRASSROOTS PUBLIC DELIBERATIONS: LESSONS FROM FIELD OBSERVATIONS**

In this chapter, I address the research question number two— how *is participatory development enacted in actual community interactions with Oxfam and World Vision staff?* My goal is to provide thick descriptions of the communicative aspects of grassroots deliberations I observed. Following descriptions I will take a critical turn and reflect on how public deliberations on development are enacted during NGO-community meetings. I explore whether the relationships between development actors and situations on the ground help develop or constrain participation. More specifically, I examine the representation and significance of the voices of citizens and experts who participated in the meetings I attended. I looked at the strategies employed to integrate expertise into participation. The participants' roles, the power they have and the means of persuasion available to them will guide the overall analysis of the field observation data.

Participation in development has four critical elements as outlined by the United Nations Development Program (1997): participation in decision-making, participation in implementation, participation in benefit sharing and participation in evaluation. Each of these levels of participation entails a different type of relationship between development agency workers and the communities they serve. Thus, in this analysis, I focus on participation in decision-making. This is the stage where community representatives are supposed to engage in deliberations to negotiate their interests with the NGO workers. Context is very important in understanding communication. Thus, before I get to data presentation and analysis, I will establish the context of the communication act by

describing the two NGOs' roles at the grassroots level and the socio economic and cultural features of the communities the NGOs work with.

### **NGOs' Engagement in the Study Sites and the Communities**

In chapter one, I have introduced the ethos of Oxfam and World Vision. Their history in Ethiopia and their development interest areas were also discussed. In what follows, I will present these NGO's programs in the study area. Following that, I will introduce the communities in my study sites.

#### **Oxfam GB Engagement in the Study Area**

Most of the people (87%) in Limmu Seqqa *woreda* are small scale farmers that grow “Arabica” coffee. Most of the organic coffee from this area ends up in the US, Germany, Belgium, Japan, France and the UK. According to the 1999 national census, the total population of the *woreda* is 151,880 out of which about 49 per cent are females.

The Limmu Seqqa district is located 457 km (283 miles) south west of Addis Ababa. The district covers 177,064.36 ha (1777 km<sup>2</sup>) of land, which is subdivided into 38 *kebeles* (peasant associations). The altitude of the *woreda* ranges from 800 to 2200 metres above sea level. The temperature ranges from 12.1 to 24.7 °C (54-77 °F).

The major development problems in the area, according to the Oxfam field office, include shortage of schools, health institutions, potable water supply, widespread malaria, lack of veterinary services to deal with livestock diseases, high cost of modern agricultural inputs, and inadequate infrastructural facilities.

#### **World Vision Engagement in the Study Area**

World Vision launched an area development program (ADP) in Adama *woreda* in 1991. Since then it has been undertaking various emergency relief, rehabilitation and

development programs. In the last few years, Adama ADP has adopted an integrated and holistic program approach geared toward achieving eight program goals: 1) increasing agricultural production for the targeted households, 2) increasing access to food for targeted households, 3) improving health status of the households and community, 4) reducing spread of HIV/AIDS and increase care for victims, 5) improving education status of the community, 6) improving community capacity, 7) enhancing child development, and 8) improving program management.

Adama ADP has a program office and residence quarters/camp for about 20 core staff. The fenced, well protected, compound is situated about a mile outside of a small Rift Valley town-Awash Melkassa, which is located 120 km (75 miles) southeast of the capital, Addis Ababa. Topographically, the *Woreda* varies from flat lands to sloping (hilly) escarpments. Its altitude ranges from 1300 to 1800 meters above sea level. The area temperatures range from 24 to 32<sup>0</sup>C (75-90<sup>0</sup>F). The total population of Adama *Woreda* is 110,560; 86% of whom are subsistence farmers who grow maize, *teff*<sup>8</sup>, haricot bean, wheat, sorghum and some fruits and vegetables. They also raise livestock such as cattle, sheep/goat, pack animals and camels. The majority of the population (95%) is ethnic Oromo. According to information from World Vision's Adam field office, Coptic orthodox Christians make up 55% of the *woreda's* population, while the balance is Muslim (30%), Protestant (2%), and "others" (13%). Those categorized by World Vision as "others" could possibly be followers of traditional Oromo rituals.

---

<sup>8</sup> Teff is a cereal grain native to Northeastern Africa and Southwestern Arabia. It has been used in Ethiopia in particular to make the staple food for many people-*injera*

## The Research Communities

A great majority of the population that dwells in both my research areas are ethnic Oromos. *Afaan Oromo* is the working language. I chose my study communities to be Oromos, first because they are one of the marginalized ethnic groups in Ethiopia. They never assumed real central political power. The hegemonic group, the Amharas, use pejorative stereotypes to address the Oromos and portray them as barbaric pagans (Levine, 1974). Such labeling made it possible for others (especially the Amharas) to expand to the Oromo areas to “civilize” them. This is parallel to Western discourses used by Europeans to demonize Africans and pave the way for colonialism (Hassen, 1990). For example, Hassen cites the first sentence from an important work of Abba Bahray- “History of the Galla,” which reads, “I have begun to write history of the Galla in order to make known the number of their tribes, their readiness to kill people, and the brutality of their manner” (p .2).<sup>9</sup> If NGOs commitment to empowering people and giving them voice is to be studied, a community like the Oromos will provide a good case. Simmons (2007) likewise asserts, “Power relations are more readily apparent from the perspective of the less powerful because they are the first to be denied access to decision making” (p. 15). Second, the Oromos have traditional and modern modes of cooperation (Ta’a, 1996). It is important to see how far development NGOs take such traditional institutions into account in their effort to bring about social change among the Oromos. Third, I am an Oromo, born in Oromia region. This is the community I know fairly well. My knowledge of *Afaan Oromo* helps me understand everything the community members will tell me.

---

<sup>9</sup> Galla is a derogatory word officially used by others until the beginning of the 1990s to mean the Oromos. In actuality the word means barbarian.

The Oromo are the largest Ethnic group in Ethiopia constituting about 40 per cent of the total population of the country (Baxter, Hultin & Triulzi, 1996; Legesse, 2000; Markakis, 2011). They are also among the most numerous in Africa (Baxter et al 1996; Marsakis, 2011). They are a distinct people with a unique and autonomous culture (Megersas, 1996) and their own language—Afaan Oromo. By and large, different Oromo groups share similar core cultural values and modes of thought, although there are slight variations between the pastoralists and the subsistence farmers (Baxter et al., 1996; Legesse, 1973; Megerssa, 1996).

“Oromo groups share common cultural and historical roots in the form of kinship, political philosophy, worldview and ritual” (Jalata, 2001, p. 59). They have a biologically and social constructed kinship system which is subdivided into clan, lineage and extended family systems (Jalata, 2001). According to Jalata (2001), the organizing principles of Oromo worldview and culture include: 1) belief in the existence of a monotheistic Supreme Being, Waqaa, and 2) accepting the existence of two sets of rule (the law of God and the law of man) where the rule of God is immutable and laws of man can be changed through democratic deliberative processes. It is very important to note here that the Oromo people have had a traditional “political organization, the forum for debate and the democratic means of reaching consensus on all decisions affecting the common good,” which should be obtained “without force or coercion, without excluding the interest of any group, within the Oromo society and outside it, in the broader context of the national and international arena” (Jalata, 2001, p. 62).

Another vital point, from the point of view of this research, discussed by Jalata (2001) is the Oromo concept of social development known as *finna* (sustainable development, heritage): Drawing on the Oromia Support Group, Jalata writes:

As in any society, social changes occur in Oromo society by combining the cumulative historical experiences with the contemporary condition. Hence *finna* “represents the legacy of the past which each generation inherits from its forefathers and which it transforms; it is the fertile patrimony held in trust by the present generation which it will enrich and bequeath to future generations. . . . It describes a movement emanating from inside, a developing of the inner potential of society based on the cultural roots it has already laid down.” (p. 62)

The concept and practices of participation on issues that matter are not foreign to the Oromo. Many scholars agree the *Gada* system is the overarching organizing principle of the Oromo political culture. Jalata (2001) contends, “*Gada* has been the foundation of Oromo civilization” (p. 62). Legesse (1973) explains:

The *Gada* system is a system of classes (*luba*) that succeed each other every eight years in assuming military, economic, political, and ritual responsibilities. Each gada class remains in power during a specific term (*gada*) which begins and ends with a formal power transfer ceremony. (p. 8)

Legesse (2000) sees *Gada* as “a multi-headed system of government, based on division of labor and a pattern of mutual regulation between different institutions” (p. .xxiii). Some scholars assert *Gada* is an indigenous African political system that is different from contemporary Western democracy. Others advance the thesis that Oromo

institutions like *Gada* have no political significance or practical functions (Hassen, 1990; Legesse, 2000).

Oromo traditions survive and remain intact owing to some underground practices of the *gada* (Gemechu, 1996; Jalata, 2001). One of the challenges to the very basis of the Oromo culture comes from Christian Abyssinianism, which borrows much from Judeo-Christian traditions (Gemechu, 1996). Gemechu notes the Oromo belief in *Waaqa* is portrayed as “a form of devil worship” and hence laying the basis for the prejudice against Oromo and Oromo belief (p. 97). It will be very important to see how the cultural situations of these communities factor into the participatory development NGOs claim to foster.

### **Presentation and Analysis of Field Observation Data**

Data comes from my 65 notebook sheets (9" X 7") of handwritten field notes and from actual tape-recorded interactions that resulted in 17 pages of typed, single-spaced text. I gathered field data for a period of ten weeks. I attended nine meetings lasting from 37 minutes to three and a half hours. I would have loved to attend more meetings. However, such deliberative moments do not come frequently. It took World Vision staffs a while to make these meetings happen mainly for two reasons: 1) The staff members seemed to have found it difficult to recollect their focus and get back to business, and 2) It was not easy to organize meetings as the months of October and November are the major grain harvest seasons in most part of Ethiopia. Out of the total of nine meetings I observed at the research sites, I detail two of them; one from each of Oxfam and World Vision's working localities. I purposely chose these two meetings for analysis because they demonstrate many of the characteristics typical of deliberations between

NGO workers and communities in the research sites. At the Oxfam site, the rest two meetings were adult literacy programs. They were not appropriate for my analysis because they adopted more of the traditional top-down approach. There were no decisions to be made through discussions. In the case of World Vision, all the five meetings involved varied degrees of deliberation. But the one I chose for analysis was the longest of the meetings I observed. It was also among the two meetings that were attended by a larger and heterogeneous group of participants. In regards to the way the deliberations proceeded, the meeting I chose to analyze was not much different from the rest four. It is not my intention to compare organizations or localities in terms of engaging communities in public deliberations. As my study is rooted in critical/interpretive research traditions, I resist the temptation to make any kind of generalizations.

In the course of describing these two communicative events, I mention unique features witnessed, if any, in other meetings to supplement the description of the two meetings and give a complete account of how grassroots deliberations between development stakeholders were portrayed. Before I get to the data presentation and analysis, I would like to describe the core ideas in Habermas' theory of communicative action and make an argument about why I think it is a very good lens to see participatory deliberations over issues of social development.

### **Theory of Communicative Action and the Ideal Speech Situation**

It is believed public deliberations would be most beneficial when they are all inclusive, open and honest. Deliberations often become undemocratic when power imbalances among individual participants go unchecked. I wondered how deliberations



would go in an ideal world where there are no issues of power. Jürgen Habermas has an answer for this question. To shed some light on theoretical foundations of deliberations and what deliberations would look like in an ideal situation would be helpful in better understanding the nature of the meetings I am going to describe. Thus, in what follows I will highlight Habermas' "theory of communicative action" and a related concept of "the ideal speech situation."

Habermas' "theory of communicative action" describes how consensus created through intersubjective group communication could be regarded as an alternative to "the subjectivistic and individualistic premises of modern philosophy and social theory" (McCarthy, 1984, p. vi). Habermas (1984), communicative action is "those linguistically mediated interactions in which all participants pursue illocutionary aims, and only illocutionary aims, with their mediating acts of communication" (p. 295). Habermas' theory of communicative rationality presupposes there is no a priori set of established best solutions to social problems. So what is considered "rational" would be the understanding and consensus reached through dialogue. Whereas social action and not communication is the ultimate goal of deliberations, Habermas argues the procedures people follow to arrive at conclusions set apart different approaches rather than the conclusions themselves. Habermas explains:

[T]he communicative model of action does not equate action with communication. Language is a means of communication which serves mutual understanding, whereas actors, in coming to an understanding with one another so as to coordinate their actions, pursue their particular aims. In this respect the teleological structure is fundamental to *all* concepts of action. Concepts of social

action are distinguished by how they specify this coordination among the goal-directed actions of different participants-as the interlacing of egocentric calculations of utility, as a socially integrating consensus about norms and values instilled through cultural tradition and socialization, or as reaching understanding in the sense of a cooperative process of interpretations... The interpretive accomplishments on which cooperative processes are based represent the mechanism for *coordinating* action; communicative action is *not exhausted* by the act of reaching understanding in an interpretive manner. (p. 101)

What Habermas (1984) calls "teleological structure" or instrumental model of action is the dominant model which presupposes that "the actor attains an end or brings about the occurrence of a desired state by choosing means that have promise of being successful in the given situation and applying them in a suitable manner" (p. 85). In contrast to the teleological model, the concept of communicative action refers to "the interaction of at least two subjects capable of speech and action who establish interpersonal relations." The central concept, according to Habermas, is that the actors "seek to reach an understanding about the action situation and their plans of action in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement." He emphasizes the crucial role language has in negotiating the agreements. The communicatively achieved agreements, according to Habermas, are always subject to criticism and change. Thus, the procedural rationality does not promise interlocutors would arrive at correct conclusions all the time. The good thing is that there is a room to continuously test the conclusions if there is a valid reason to doubt their authenticity (Eriksen & Weigard, 2003). Habermas (1984) explains:

Unlike instrumental reason, communicative reason cannot be subsumed without resistance under a blind self-preservation. It refers neither to a subject that preserves itself in relating to objects via representation and action, nor to a self-maintaining system that demarcates itself from an environment, but to a symbolically structured lifeworld that is constituted in the interpretive accomplishments of its members and only reproduced through communication. Thus communicative reason does not simply encounter ready-made subjects and systems; rather, it takes part in structuring what is to be preserved. (p. 398).

The important conditions are that "all parties involved in deliberations have the same fundamental right to have their voices heard" (Eriksen & Weigard, 2003, p. 7). There would be no interference of powerful institutions such as the state. The assumption is that citizens will be free to go whatever direction open dialogs and their thinking could take them. For a speech community to reach consensus, Habermas argues, there should not be regard for social status or rank. This suggests that it is important to bracket power differentials and assume discussions were taking place amongst equals.

Drawing from Habermas, Hanson (1985) describes "an ideal of democratic discourse in which power plays no role" (p. 37). In such an ideal situation, Hanson argues, "reason rather than power carries the day" (p. 37). He argues this conception of "democratic discourse" is not something arbitrary because it is grounded in a communication ethics that is in some sense objective (p. 38). Hanson explains the nature of the ideal speech situation and the underlying notion of communication ethics as follows:

Ideal speech situations are characterized by a mutual orientation toward reaching an understanding on the part of participants who enjoy equal standing in the discussion and who have equal chances for selecting and employing various arguments on their own behalf (McCarthy 1973). These formal conditions of discourse are connected with the conditions for an ideal form of life in which coercion is absent, and all communication is governed by a communicative ethics oriented toward the force of the better argument. (p. 38).

Similarly, Gareis (2010) identified four conditions Habermas described as most important for ideal discourses: 1) No one capable of making a contribution is excluded, 2) participants have equal voice and equal chances to make arguments, 3) participants are honest with each other and with themselves, and 4) there is no coercion built into the process.

Although Habermas originally developed the theory of communicative action by conducting the rise and fall of the bourgeois public sphere, it lends a good lens for the study of public deliberations in contemporary societies. That Habermas' notion is centered at developing citizen power and challenging the elites who usually make important decisions in society makes the theory of communicative action very relevant for the analysis of participatory act in any society. Habermas is critical of modern days where he believes decisions are made at higher levels by political and economic system players. But Habermas (1989) seems to believe the socially integrated sphere (the non-political, "lifeworld" or the "authentic public sphere") that is "constituted by private people" (p. 30) still matters when it comes to forming public opinions communicatively

(Eriksen & Weigard, 2003). Thus, the communicative action is a useful theory for the illumination of grassroots-level participatory development practices.

Now that we have theoretical standards which enable us better understand the communicative acts I am going to analyze. What comes next is data presentation and analysis. In putting what I have learned from the field observations into perspective, I borrowed Kenneth Burke's Dramatistic Method approach, which offers a logical approach to understanding human motives.

Burke (1968) developed the pentad as a critical framework used to analyze human motivation as embedded in symbolic actions. The pentad is a five-element (*act, scene, agent, agency* and *purpose*) frame, which is used to understand why people do what they do. I employ the Burkean method to understand how NGO-community meeting participants enact participation and to reflect on why they act in the ways they do. Communication scholars have long used Burke's theory (symbolic action) and the pentadic tool for the analysis of political speeches (Meisenbach, Remke, Buzzanell & Liu, 2008). Recently, scholars have employed the pentadic mapping in a number of different ways to study various rhetorical artifacts ranging from songs (Sealey-Morris, 2009) to interviews (Messenbach et al., 2008) to a live negotiation process (Fox, 2002). The pentadic approach is appropriate especially for the study of the performative dimensions of rhetoric that manifest in grassroots public deliberations. Fox (2002) argues, "Dramatism offers critical researchers of workplace communication a useful analytical tool" (p. 365). She used Burke's pentad to analyze a case study of the negotiation process between technical writers and engineers in a workplace setting.

In the current study, this approach generally enables me, as a critic, to better understand how decisions on things that matter to communities are made (*act*) through public deliberations (*agency*) against certain rhetorical situations (*scene*) that might have required the meeting participants (*actors*) to enact the "community participation" drama in certain ways to achieve the ultimate goal of community development (*purpose*). My choice of the pentadic approach is consistent with my argument in Chapter Three for the marriage of rhetorical criticism and field methods rooted in ethnography. I try here to maintain a good balance between describing situations on the ground and critically reflecting on them.

In doing the analysis, I first provide descriptions that account for the five elements. Burke (1969) argued, "Any complete statement about motives will offer some kind of answers to these five questions: what was done (*act*), when or where it was done (*scene*), who did it (*agent*), how he did it (*agency*), and why (*purpose*)" (p. xv). In the current research the cases selected for analysis are meetings. It is often difficult in situations where there are multiple competing interests and where there is no clearly identified rhetor to spot the five pentadic elements. I embrace the complexity and try to show the scope of ambiguity as they play out. Burke (1969, xviii) argued, "What we want *is not terms that avoid ambiguity, but terms that clearly reveal the strategic spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise*" (emphasis in original). In my effort to locate the five pentadic elements, I focus on the roles emphasized in the rhetoric of community participation. Different people can look at the same rhetorical events I observed and come up with different elements (*act*, *scene*, *agent*, *agency* and *purpose*).

Once I have identified the five elements, I explore the relationships ("ratios") among these elements. Ratios are important relationships that exist between the elements of pentad. Looking at this relationships, according to Burke, is critical in understanding motives. There are twenty possible conjunctions or "ratios" (e.g., act-agent, act-scene, agent-scene, etc), which provide different screens through which we can see the "drama." According to Burke, some ratios are more salient than others. Thus, I would focus on four pentadic ratios namely scene-agency, agent-agency, agent-act and agency-act ratios since agency is the dominant element that embodies participation. The mapping process with each case would lead me to answers of three main questions: 1) how does power manifest itself in behaviors and relationships of organizations and meeting participants? 2) To what extent have community members and NGO workers been able to influence the direction and outcome of deliberative processes? 3) How close were the meetings I observed to the "ideal speech situation" JürgenHabermas described?

In what follows, I present each of the two representative cases, turn by turn, together with the corresponding pentadic mapping. First, I focus on the tight pentadic circumference, which is the NGO-community meeting in each case. Then, I explore the pentadic relationships considering the wider, societal circumference. By looking at the drama at this level, I study how the complex relationships between the local, the national and the international-level might have affected the nature of the drama in the tighter circumference.

### **Case 1: Oxfam-Community Meeting**

I got a chance to observe four Oxfam-community encounters in the Limmu Seqqa *woreda*. Two of them were adult literacy programs supported by Oxfam and offered to

the community by the Adult and Non Formal Education Association in Ethiopia (ANFEAE). The adult literacy program followed a skills training approach dominated by a top-down flow of information followed by demonstrations. Whereas the experts were the sources of information, the adult learners were there mainly to hear from the source and try to put new information into farming practices. The learners rarely engaged in discussions. They had to give short answers whenever asked. In my view, these two adult literacy programs - do not provide the best examples of NGO-community interaction (see photos in appendices A & B). The other two observations were a women's association weekly meetings attended by an Oxfam agent. I chose the the two meetings for analysis because of the effort participants put into to make decisions. In what follows, I will describe the rhetorical situation and look at this meeting through the pentadic ratios.

**Scene-agency ratio.** On October 30, 2012, Oxfam-supported community-based origination, Lelistu<sup>10</sup> Women's Saving and Self-help Association held one of its regular weekly meetings. The meeting took place in a "meeting hall" (see appendix C) located within a few minutes walking distance from the villages in which most of the members lived. A lady who formerly used it as a kindergarten class area abandoned this "hall". Located about 100 meters away from this location, the administration office of the *kebele* keeps an eye on the facility.

As I approached the meeting venue, together with a young, Ethiopian Oxfam agent, I started to hear some kind of crowd making a considerable noise. Close to 50 people, mostly women, were there. While a few were sitting in the corrugated metal sheet

---

<sup>10</sup> *Lelistu* means "sprout" in the Oromo language which is spoken by over 95 per cent of the total Limmu Seqqa *woreda* population. It shows the women's conviction to come out of their shell and change their situation for good.



roofed hall, which had walls made of unprocessed wooden logs, others were carrying on small group informal conversations right in front of the hall. When we arrived, they got into the hall and sat on long, wood log benches. After a while, most of the women were dismissed, because they were told the meeting of the day concerned only the "executive committee members." I later learned that the meeting actually brought together the executive committee of the association (consisting of the chair, vice chair, secretary, treasurer and a few other members) and the grain mill committee (consisting of chair, secretary and treasurer).

Lelistu association members met every Wednesday to deposit weekly savings. Following the fee collections, members would sit down together at the meeting hall and discuss issues of concern. Sometimes the Oxfam agent and the government cooperatives organizer would participate in the meetings. Reports on financial and other administration matters are heard every month. Apparently this particular meeting was organized because a grain mill purchased for Lelistu Women's Self-help Association "retarded" after working only for a month. The women suspected that a "forged" part was put into the grain mill when it was assembled seven months previously. They stopped operating for fear of breaking a major part. The discussion centered around what to do to fix the mill and get it back into efficient service.

It can be generally said that the scene contained the agency. The meeting location seemed to be the natural habitat for the association members because it was close to where they lived and relatively independent. They seemed to have felt at home. Their opportunities to discuss issues openly and make decisions did not appear to be constrained by the meeting location.

**Agent-agency ratio.** The majority of the executive committee members of Lelistu Association (agents in this drama) were middle-aged housewives who had lived in the Seqqa locality for their entire lives. They earned their income from small-scale coffee and crops (e.g., Corn, *teff* and millet) farming. Since coffee is the main cash earner, they would be okay economically in a year where "coffee gives good [yield]." More often than not, they struggle to make ends meet.

Lelistu self-help association was formed ten years ago. Members gave the biggest credit for the formation of the association to the Women's Affairs Office of the local government. The association had secured legal standing by meeting the government registration requirements. Members have written bylaws with the help of the local government office. According to their regulations, executive committee members are to be elected by association members and serve six-year terms. Lelistu members used to be teased and ridiculed by their husbands and other members of the community for "unnecessarily gathering and spending time talking." Mekiya, one of the executive committee members, noted, "Some people even considered us heathens because they thought we went against Islamic traditions. We didn't give them a damn." Attesting to this, Abawari, the government person, indicated that these women "have beaten every criticism." Gradually, community members and the husbands of these women have started to embrace the advantages of organizing."

As of November 2012, Lelistu Association had 107 members who save 1 *Birr* (the equivalent of US \$ 0.05) a week. The money they saved over the years paid for a certain part of the grain mill Oxfam helped them buy. The women hold meetings on various issues on a weekly basis. The chairperson of the association noted the meetings helped

them "learn from each other." The majority of these women have hardly had any formal education. Oxfam has given them repeated training on developing savings and financial management.

On the other hand, the Oxfam staff member is a college graduate who is about half the age of most of the committee members. She was the face of Oxfam in the area. I could tell, based on my observation, that she had an amicable relationship with the community. Despite her age, she seemed to be on top of situations and the association chairperson described her as "our mother." The women were so happy to see her come back to the village after they heard about the car accident she was involved in. Part of the reason she connected well with the community could be because she spoke their language and understood the culture very well. She grew up in a place that shares a lot with these communities.

The Oxfam staff introduced me and told them to proceed with their meeting "as if we (she and I) are not here." I thought she said that because she knew I was interested in observing community participation. She either wanted me to see for myself the association committees could hold discussions and reach consensus or she wanted to buy time and see what directions they wanted to go with their agendas. She came back to the village after two months of absence because of a concussion she picked up from a car accident.

Participants were neither intimidated nor pressured to change the nature of their deliberations in significant ways because of the presence of the Oxfam agent and cooperatives organizer. In some instances she helped bring some important ideas in the form of questions (e.g. "Do you have any idea about the price [of the part to be

purchased]?” and made suggestions here and there (e.g. "It would be good if you talk to a person who has experience working with mills")

Lelistu Association chair, Saba (49), took the floor to present the situation that lead up to the discussion that followed. When I interviewed her later, she told me she had no formal education whatsoever. She was confident, articulate and seemed to have the experience of leading meetings. She never tried to impose her ideas on others. She preferred to ask questions like "What can we do about the grain mill? Where can we get the money we need to purchase the broken part and for the labor costs? She asked some participants to calm down when they got upset and started to yell at each other. There were some instances of side talks. The participants spoke in random orders without waiting for permission from the chairperson. Sometimes they never waited until others finished speaking. The chairperson cared more about reaching agreement on the solutions for the problem at hand. The association chairperson, the secretary, the treasurer and grain mill committee chair were by far the most active participants. Especially two women that were sitting on the far corner did not speak out.

In general, the ways the community actors had acted during the deliberative process (agency) was very much influenced by the social identity they had individually (poor farmers aspiring to help raise their family income) and collectively as members of the community and Lelistu association. Their honesty, commitment to change and passion made the deliberation (agency) lively.

**Agent-act ratio:** To provide a more nuanced description, I would present the agent-act ratio based on the two different agents: the Oxfam worker and the community members. The Oxfam agent took more of a laid back position during the meeting. Even

then, her very presence seemed to have mattered. Her power was demonstrated, among others, by the way the ladies rushed into the hall when we arrived. She drives her power from the expertise she had and her membership in a development and advocacy organization, Oxfam. I observed that the women talked to the Oxfam agent with due respect. The meeting did not start until they got a "go ahead" from her.

Her voice was soft but still had an authoritative tone. For a person like me, who was socialized into the Oromo culture, her influence was noticeable. Had it not been for the organization and expertise she embodied, she would not have the chance to speak in front of elders, let alone influencing the direction of their meeting. This is a culture where elders are highly respected, under normal circumstances. However, given the power this young Oxfam worker embodied, the participants of the meeting behaved in a manner that fits the power relationships. During this particular meeting, it was difficult to cite many examples of how she influenced the meeting. She took more of a backstage position. I had a sense her agency could have possibly swayed decisions. The participants were trying to look the Oxfam agent and the government worker in their eyes every time they were going to make suggestions. She jumped in only when she found it necessary to give some directions like "you also need to purchase tickets to control your income properly. You better include that in your minutes." After participants decided to get the mill fixed, the Oxfam agent offered to help with purchasing the spare part for the mill from Jimma, the nearest big town to the Limmu Seqqa locality. She was also heard saying "I will come back next week and see how far you have accomplished."

The other agents were the ten committee members. Very strong social bonds between them made it easier for them to reach understanding and make decisions. Not

only did they live in the same village, but also had a lot in common culturally. A great majority of them were Muslims. They seemed to trust each other. For example, the treasurer said, "I can let you borrow the money with me and get it back. I don't even need your signature. I believe you." Compromises derived from the blend of modern organizational bureaucracies with traditional community values helped facilitate understanding and decision-making. The power they got by virtue of membership on the executive committee seemed to have given them confidence to express themselves and pass decisions. This is not usually the case in predominantly Muslim and patriarchal communities. Thus, their relationships with the in-group members served as a social capital that enhanced the deliberative process (agency) and ability to make decisions (act).

**Agency-act ratio:** Having seen how the meeting proceeded, I wondered how the means used in negotiating solutions (i.e deliberations, agency) might have affected the decision-making act. The meeting was attended by women who were legitimate to conduct open discussions on the agenda for the day (by virtue of being elected leader of the association). Except for the association's secretary who had to miss because of ailment, every other executive committee member was in attendance.

Most of the participants effectively used their chances of airing out concerns, ideas and making suggestion. Occasionally a few of them talked at a time and the meeting looked chaotic. There were also instances they got off track and talked about other issues (e.g. about a missing, five-year old child). Not only the chairperson but also any other concerned participant had to appeal "let us get back to our agenda, please."

There were lots of noises coming from the outside. Even then, they tried to stay focused and deliberated on the agenda.

Every participant had a good understanding of Afaan Oromo, the language spoken by over 95% of the population. A couple of them preferred to speak in Amharic. While there was no agreement made on the language to be used and other procedural issues, there seemed no problem of understanding. They were okay with the switching of languages. They would read non-verbal cues and emotions and respond appropriately. It did not take them long time to reach agreements on each issue. In fact, the whole meeting took about twenty-seven minutes.

Whereas the chairperson assumed the formal responsibility of setting up the meeting, emphasizing the agreed on points and wrapping it up, the meeting was largely chaired collaboratively. Everybody jumped in and gave directions and asked for order whenever they felt like doing it. They were comfortable expressing agreements (saying "ok," "yes") or disagreements ("no," "why should we?" and even "I don't agree"). Organizing into a savings and self-help association and meeting regularly seemed to have helped them learn about modern bureaucratic practices like meeting procedures, taking minutes and financial management.

Thus, the deliberations they conducted (agency) seemed to have made collective decision-making (act) possible. It appeared they arrived at a decision which is legitimately right for the problem, at least at that particular moment (this is what Habermas and other scholars would consider as procedural rationality). The secretary wrote the minutes while other participants had some informal conversations in a more

relaxed situation. As soon as she was done, she read the minutes aloud and they were signed by everyone. Literally the minutes translate as:

We the undersigned executive committee members discussed about the grain mill and decided that the mill should be fixed. It is agreed the money needed for this purpose is to be taken from the account of the grain mill in the form of a loan. The expenses include Birr 500 [\$ 25] for the purchase of the part, Birr 200 [\$10] for per diem of the person to go and buy. In addition, agreement has been reached to spend Birr 20 [\$10] for the purchase of 10 pads of tickets.

Overall, the meeting of the executive committee members of Lelistu self-help association held (in the presence of Oxfam agent and a government employed cooperatives organizer) was for the most part participatory. It might be difficult to suggest it has met all the four requirements of the ideal speech situation standards outlined by Habermas. All the committee members had attended the meeting. The meeting was inclusive of voices since these committee members were elected by the general association membership. There was no signs of excluding voices. In principle, they had equal voice and equal chances to make arguments. Participants seemed to be empowered to discuss issue and make decisions. But, let us not forget that these committee members are leaders elected mostly because of their better education and capacity of articulating ideas. They were honest with each other and with themselves. There was no overt attempts of coercion. Still, I cannot propound the process was totally free from power relationships.



## Case 2: World Vision-Community Meeting

Between October 14 and November 10, 2012, I observed five World Vision and community joint meetings held in different villages of Adama *Woreda*. All five meetings had a similar purpose of creating the fiscal year's specific work plans and deciding on community members who were to be targeted for individual activities. World Vision does this planning every year in this time frame because the fiscal year begins on October 1st for the organization. Thus, in what follows, I describe in detail the meeting conducted in *kebele* X (pseudo name) and the situations leading up to the meeting.

I was very excited to go on my first trip to rural community villages, nine years after I quit my job with World Vision. The first chance came after I stayed in World Vision staff's office and residence compound for more than a week, waiting for this meetings to happen (In the mean time I was interviewing staff members, individual community and local government experts). The camp is a well-fenced compound located at the outskirts of a small town, Melkassa. Most of the World Vision staff residence quarters I knew looked nothing like the community. They looked fancy, well maintained and protected kind of symbolically suggesting the status difference between the staffers and the community they are there to serve. I understand, the organization finds it difficult to keep experts away from major cities unless it provides them with extra facilities. The compound's main gate has always been closed. A guard who constantly stays at the gate opens it for whoever is authorized to come in. In an informal conversation, one of the guards told me he needed to get permission from "the office" before allowing community members come in.

At about eleven o'clock in the morning, I left the camp with a World Vision agent (a well-intentioned, hard working Ethiopian person in his mid thirties hereafter referred to as World Vision agent or "development facilitator," his formal title). We were joined by a community worker who World Vision had hired from the Melkassa locality. He is the person that serves as a cultural liaison between World Vision and the community. He does all the grassroots routines in *kebeles* designated to him and reports to the development facilitator. Hereafter, I refer to this person as World Vision "Community worker). Two government-employed development agents who live in the town of Melkassa came with us to the *kebele* office in World Vision's station wagon. On our way, I kept thinking that trip symbolized the dominant direction of information flow; from the powerful elites who are based in the towns to the villagers. Some of us brought bottled water because the village had no safe running water. If villagers get water from springs capped by World Vision, they had to walk, on average, for over half an hour.

A distance of about seven miles took us close to half an hour because some of the roads were treacherous dirt roads. Upon our arrival, the *kebele* leaders started to clean two old tables in the small (2.5 by 5 meters) main office of *kebele* X before the meeting, which started a few minutes after we got there. When the meeting began, there were eight participants (all men) that included the World Vision development facilitator, the World Vision community worker, two school principals, two government development agents, the *kebele* chairperson and a child caretaker. About half an hour later, three women participants joined the meeting (two of them identified themselves as community child caretakers and the third one was a health extension agent hired by the local government). Out of the total eleven participants, seven were elites (at least by local standards) who

had completed at least high school. Five of them had some college education. The most educated person in the meeting was the World Vision facilitator who had a college degree. All but the World Vision community worker were not originally from the locality they are working in. They were assigned to work there because of their expertise. With at least two years of service in the area, they had a fairly good knowledge of the locality. All of these people get paid (two of them by World Vision and the rest by the state).

The World Vision facilitator asked participants to introduce themselves. They told their names and roles in the *kebele's* development committee. Then, the World Vision person introduced me as a university teacher who was there to do research about communication among development partners. It did not seem to matter to them why I was there. They treated me with respect, as they usually do with all visitors. I took a seat in the back.

The World Vision development facilitator spoke for the first eight minutes, in Amharic, introducing the purpose of the meeting as "discussing the activities to be done by World Vision in this *kebele*" and explaining why their "participation" was important. He admitted they did not conduct such a meeting before as much as they should and promised they [World Vision] would make meetings like that the modes operandi. He took out a chart of planned activities and handed out a couple of copies that were received by the school principals. Others, including the Kebele chairman, had no interest in keeping the copies when they were passed around for they were written in English. I am not sure how many of the four farmers would read anything written in any local language, let alone a foreign language one acquires in Ethiopia at higher levels of learning. The idea of what language to use was not tabled for discussion let alone being

agreed on. The meeting procedures and ground rules for the meeting were never discussed. Since it was stated that they had not held a meeting like this for a while, one cannot think the meeting procedures were understood by every participant. Although no one other than the World Vision development facilitator had Amharic as their mother tongue, the meeting proceeded in Amharic with the facilitator promising translations into Afan Oromo language. Despite some sporadic efforts at translation, Amharic was the medium of "communication". English expressions were used sometimes (e.g. when the facilitator read activities from the plan). From their facial expressions, I could tell that some of the participants were bored. For instance, the child caretaker who was sitting by the right side of the World Vision facilitator looked outside the room, yawned and frequently used his hand to support his chin (see picture in appendix D). The same was true of the *kebele* chairperson. Whenever he got the chance to speak, he tried to switch the language of the meeting to Afan Oromo. It was apparent there was a slight increase in the level of interaction when they used Afan Oromo. Those instances did not last long, though.

The *kebele* chairperson appeared to be the person conducting the meeting. He took his rightful chair behind a table placed at the center, in front of the wall opposite the gate to the small room. Since he is an elected leader for the *kebele*, one would expect him to be the most vocal person on matters pertaining to his community. As soon as the meeting started the World Vision facilitator emerged as the real leader of the meeting. Even though he sat on a desk on the left side of the *kebele* chairperson, he spoke for the first forty-two minutes with little interruption from the other participants. All the participants turned their face towards him, for most of the meeting.

**Scene-agency ratio.** Participation does not occur in a vacuum. A number of local, national and international factors affect the nature of citizen-participation in the deliberations on development. The fact that the meeting was being conducted in the *kebele* office symbolically implied that the local government is, at least nominally, in control of the development process. Four out of the five meetings I attended at World Vision's development site were conducted in *kebele* offices. People who carried AK-47 machine guns attended some meetings (see photo in appendix E). These participants came to the meetings because they had roles in development (like community child caretakers) in addition to being militiamen. However, it is important to note that machine guns are signs of power in countries like Ethiopia. They have been the means to get power and hold on to it. In another *kebele*, a big photo of the former Prime Minister was hanging on the wall. These acts may not have been done with the intention of intimidating participants. That was just the way things are locally. Even then, I got a feeling that "the government" was right there watching what was going on. This is consistent with the discourse "the government is the owner of development." Thus, in the case of the particular meeting under discussion, the scene somehow discouraged a more open discussion (agency). The meeting was conducted with a pre-set agenda, using the Amharic language, and seemed to be intimidating to some of the grassroots community participants, especially those who had no formal education.

I thought meeting under a tree would have been a more natural habitat for the community members. Especially in the Oromo community, huge cultural significance is attached to the oak tree. The Oromos traditionally held important discussions and

reconciliations in the shade of sacred trees. They have had rituals of sacrificing to their deity under such trees.

**Agent-agency ratio.** A basic condition for agents to participate in deliberations is that they get included and have access to important information. In the case under study, the World Vision agent appeared to be the sole source of information because of prior involvement in the preparation of the plan matrix. Better educated participants (school principals and government employed development agents) had a better chance of understanding the information circulated on the day of the meeting while other participants that represented the community seemed hand tied because the plan matrix was written in English. Communicating through writing is not a medium these participants are familiar with. By contrast, another meeting two of World Vision's development facilitators held on October 9, 2012 in Adama town with higher level government employed professional was intense because participants seemed to be on the same page. They all fully understood the concepts discussed. Some plans were slightly changed as a result of real negotiations. World Vision agents were pressed to explain when they said they cannot accept changes demanded by agents from the government side.

The World Vision agent was the only person who had expert-level knowledge of the *kebele* plan. He walked other participants through the plan matrix. He read most of the things as written (in English) followed by some efforts at translation. All other participants had *Afan Oromo* as their vernacular language except the World Vision agent who came from a different ethnic group. The meeting continued to be in Amharic for the most part. When participants had difficulties understanding some of the ideas, the *kebele*

chairperson translated them into *Afran Oromo*. In most cases during the meeting the expert's language was privileged. The predetermined plan that the expert brought to the meeting in the form of a matrix, which was written in English, gave the World Vision person more control in expressing his ideas while the other participants seemed to be constrained by the matrix and language.

The deliberations in the meeting between community and World Vision agents were of low intensity because of the imbalance in the rhetorical power between the agents of the organization and ordinary community members. Whenever they got the rare chance of speaking out, the community participants spent their time appreciating what World Vision had done for them in the past and politely asking for more support in certain areas. Even the *kebele* chairman, supposedly the most powerful person in the community, was asking, "You allocated budget to support three students going to college from our *kebele*, will that be enough? We kindly ask you to increase the budget, if you could, and support more kids." Comparatively, the tone of the development workers hired by the government was a little more authoritative. For example, Birhanu, an agricultural development agent, argued, "It would be good if you could revise this plan and see if there are opportunities to build more school classrooms." The same person posed a challenge to World Vision when he suggested, "I think you [World Vision] to reconsider your idea that most of the beneficiaries of the planned development programs should be sponsored children. There are kids and families in worse poverty situations than the children in sponsorship."

**Agent-act ratio.** This particular meeting organized by World Vision had two important purposes: 1) Appraisal of the fiscal year development activity plan (which

includes passing decisions accepting, modifying and rejecting proposed activities) and, 2) Selection of direct beneficiaries for each plan in the areas of education, health and agriculture. What follows explores the role participants had in decision-making.

The World Vision facilitator (agent) dominated both the deliberations (agency) and the decisions made (act). Even if we assume there was a level ground and power imbalance was bracketed, the World Vision facilitator was the one who spoke for the good part of the meeting time. In that sense, he had a better chance to make arguments and hence influence decisions. He had clearly observable advantages drawn from representing an organization communities have been looking upto for over twenty-five years and having the expertise to navigate through organizational bureaucracies. No other participants but him had set the meeting agenda. It is likely that he had thought about his rhetorical strategies in advance.

He made most of the important decisions and encouraged the community participants to make decisions on less significant issues (e.g. selecting end users of projects). The community representatives insisted World Vision should make decision ironically implying whose decision matters. For instance, when they were told to come together and select beneficiaries later, a school principal suggested it was better to make all decisions when World Vision staff members were still in the meeting. His argument was that community members not targeted would take it if they knew World Vision made the selection. Similarly, the *kebele* chairperson identified some areas of challenge and asked the facilitator, "Will you help us on these matters? It is fine if you can't give us decisions now. You can take time and look at it." The World Vision facilitator replied, "We are not here to make every decision. We are here to let you know what is planned."



As witnessed in many instances, though, he contradicted himself by making decisions. For example, he gave them instructions, towards the end of the meeting, to select beneficiaries and submit the list in a week. Even if the other participants argued it was difficult to get that done in a week, he insisted the organization's deadline for purchase request submission was working against them. The first major effort of push back on the community side did not make any difference. Agent was more important in deciding act, rather than agency.

Whereas identifying with the development organization seemed to give some participants decision-making power, other community members reflected lack of confidence in decision-making. Participants other than the World Vision staff were given the assignment of identifying individual and families to be included in the planned development interventions. The *kebele* chairperson, the two school principals and two government-hired development agents had their voice heard, at least in the form of asking questions and making suggestions. Real representatives of the community had no role in decision-making. The community actors were collapsed into being part of the scene. The voice of the three women (two community members and a government health extension agent) were muted.

**Agency-act ratio.** Deliberations (agency) dominated by discourses of paternalistic "donor-receiver" relationships on the one hand and stringent organizational bureaucracy on the hand stunted opportunities to reach at rational decisions. The powerful agents, rather than the better arguments (agency) had a bigger chance to decide the outcome of the meeting. In fact, most of the decisions (act) were made prior to the

meeting. The meeting drama was staged, mainly, for window dressing purposes. In what follows, I present examples that would help explain why I make these claims.

To begin with, the plan matrix brought to the meeting and presented by the World Vision facilitator not only set the stage but also dictated the directions of the subsequent discussions. Participants, especially those from World Vision, based their arguments on the annual plan, which was reportedly drawn from the five-year plan made at the start of the current project. When the community participants brought their development needs to the table, both the World Vision persons argued that the community "fully participated" in the designing of the five-year program and implied that the community should take responsibility for what the plan is missing. As a compromise, the World Vision staff suggested, "New needs will be addressed in the next phase if the organization extends the program life time." The fact that "community participation" in the past was used to limit the space for discussing current concerns is a noteworthy point.

The meeting proceeded in the form of lecture, giving directions, and question and answer at best. The experts outnumbered the real community representatives (farmers) (World Vision facilitator, two school principals and three development agents paid by the state). In a situation like this, one does not expect argumentative fair play. The community representatives other than the *kebele* chairperson were silent for the most part. It could be because they came later but three of them sat at the gate and sometimes looked outside. It is not clear why influential leaders, elders and heads of organized grassroots groups did not represent the community (e.g., Sugarcane producer's cooperatives).

Sitting in meetings I got the sense that there was a clear divide between World Vision and the community. The strong claim of close collaboration between the organization and the community should have been demonstrated by permeable boundaries between the two. Contrary to this, what I saw was a relationship marked by hierarchy and divide. I could easily spot the discourse of donor-receiver relationships. The community participants were frequently heard saying, "We appreciate what you have done for us." Or, "we would be very grateful if you could" do this or that for us. Similarly the World Vision facilitator used discourses of "we provide this support." These discourses of hierarchy frequently reminded participants that there is some kind of "Big brother" to make good decisions. Such notion might have diminished chances of collaborative decision-making.

Most of the meetings I observed in the Melkassa locality were not as open as they claimed to be. The constraints mostly came from conflicting organizational interests of "empowering communities" and "getting work done efficiently." Thus, the point of compromise the facilitators seemed to have found was holding meetings with communities but maintain the status quo. So, what purpose do the meetings serve? What a facilitator was overheard saying as we came out of a meeting answers this question perfectly: "We have foul plaid them [the participants]. That is it." This World Vision facilitator had no prior information about what I was studying. The second World Vision person who was with us got shocked and looked at me without saying anything. Limited attempts of demanding World Vision to incorporate current needs of the community into the plan was pushed back by the agent of the organization on the grounds of procedures and lack of resources for additional activities. He told them, "We can't do everything by

ourselves. The government and you got to participate. You might need to contribute resources." This discourse is consistent with the dominant frame of participation-making financial and labor contributions.

In sum, the ability of community participants to negotiate and influence decisions was minimal in the case of World Vision-community meetings I observed. The outcomes of the meetings were predictable. What I saw in the meetings is mostly how power manifests itself in the conversations between participants rather than collaborating to get better solutions for development challenges. There did not seem to be a shift of power from the powerful organizations to the community. During my field days I did not see any instances of the communities taking the initiative to invite NGO workers to come and talk with them about development.

### **Pentad: Wider Societal Circumference**

In the pentadic analysis of NGO-community joint meetings, we have seen that the underlying motive of holding those meetings was sending a signal that decisions on issues that matter to the community were being passed in democratic ways rather than in the traditional top-down manner. In the proceeding analysis, I chose to focus on the narrow, grassroots context. Burke (1969) notes, we have to select a circumference of the scene, as "the choice of circumference for the scene in terms of which a given act is to be located will have a corresponding effect upon the interpretation of the act itself" (p. 77). What is referred to as "circumference" by Burke is the "orbit" of the scene that contains the act. The notion of circumference is important especially in the interpretation of the motivation of the scene-act. According to Burke, "the quality of the context in which a subject is placed will affect the quality of the subject placed in that context" (pp. 77-78).

In what follows, I do a brief analysis of the pentadic relationships between elements in the wider circumference pentad. I will start by listing the pentadic elements for the wider circumference. Then, I will do the analysis of agents-agency and agents-act ratios. Finally, I bring the dramas in the tighter and wider circumferences in conversation to better understand to what extent what happens in the national and global arenas affect the nature of grassroots community deliberations. The pentadic elements for the wider circumference are:

- i. Scene: Ethiopia – a poor country in desperate need of outside aid to help improve the lives of its citizens.
- ii. Act: NGO development aid and projects
- iii. Agents: NGOs – Oxfam, World Vision, and international aid organizations (World Bank, IMF, UN, etc.), national governments
- iv. Agency: International rules and Ethiopian government control the process.
- v. Purpose: Ethiopian development

**Agent-agency ratio:** In the last three decades NGOs have become a major phenomenon in development. However, they never had the kind of legitimacy nation states enjoy because NGOs are non state actors that are not elected by any constituency. Though they collaborate with intergovernmental agencies like the UN and the World Bank on a number of issues, NGOs have only consultative roles with the UN. They cannot influence policies directly. Their role is limited to using their expertise and skills in organizing voices to persuade members of the UN (nation states) to set up agendas and pass laws that help promote development. In this regard Ahmed and Potter, 2006 argued:

The power of NGOs, then, is the power to *persuade*. Their power consists of demonstrating through *persuasion* and action that there are other ways of organizing social and political arrangements besides those currently in use. Consider the common activities of NGOs: educating the public, advocacy, empowering people through local economic development and network construction, and monitoring international agreements. None of those involves coercion, all take place within legal frameworks established by states either individually or collectively, and all involve *persuasive communication*. (p. 15)  
[emphasis is mine]

The other agents of global rural development are individual nation states and intergovernmental agents. These organs do have the power to influence agency directly. They can pass laws as individual, sovereign nations or collectively as UN membership. Generally these agency like to see political spaces broadened for civil societies (including NGOs). They put pressure on governments of aim receiving countries to provide NGOs freedom to operate because of their vested interest in liberal democracy.

Governments in the receiving end pass laws that may support or constrain NGO programs in their country. For example, the Ethiopian government has passed NGOs' legislation as we have seen in the previous chapter. Through laws like this, the Ethiopian government has been controlling NGOs' operations in the country. Thus, it can be generally said that agents of rural development (other than NGOs) can pass rules (agency) that could facilitate or constrain NGO development programs (act).

**Agent-act ratio:** Not all NGOs are the same. NGOs differ in their philosophy, approach to development, and funding partnerships (Suar, Hota & Sinha, 2006). Suar et

al., classified NGO into four categories: Operational or grassroots NGOs, support NGOs, network NGOs and funding NGOs. I would say both Oxfam and World Vision are operational and support NGOs. While Oxfam has a good reputation of international advocacy campaigns, World Vision is very strong on the grassroots service provision front. Long years of experiences in executing programs at grassroots levels (act) have enabled these NGOs gain the trust of donors. Trust is important for NGOs to secure more funding and further their development programs (act). According to Hilhorst (2003) NGO have dual role of securing legitimacy on the one hand and living upto their claims by engaging in the business of making life for the unprivileged others. On the quest for "legitimation" front Hilhorst (2003) argues NGOs have to convince others of their appropriateness and trustworthiness. Such an act, according to Hilhorst, is no easy job as it entails convincing others that: 1) the situation or population needs development, 2) the intervention of NGOs is indispensable and appropriate and that the NGO has no self interest in the envisaged program, and 3) the NGO is trustworthy and capable of carrying out the intervention.

Governments of wealthy nations and intergovernmental organizations are among the partners of development NGOs need to persuade for funding and policy reasons. For example, Oxfam International has lobbying offices in Washington, D.C., New York, Brussels, and Geneva while Oxfam's coordinating secretariat remains in Oxford. In America, advocacy offices lobby not only the US government but also the World Bank, The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and, the UN" (Ahmed and Potter, 2006). Especially the UN and the World Bank have modest grant programs to support NGO

project since 1994 (Ahmed & Potter, 2006). In 2011, World Vision got about 17.4% (485 million) of its total income (2.79 billion) (World Vision International, 2011).

Ahmed and Potter (2006) argue aid agencies as well benefit in a number of ways: 1) channeling aid through NGOs allows them to expand the scope of their aid operations especially in countries where their official presence is thin or nonexistent, 2) because NGOs are less constrained by bureaucratic organization, they can deliver services more efficiently than their counterparts, 3) public subsidies for small-scale NGO projects provide donors with a mechanism to implement a basic human-needs approach to development, and 4) directly subsidizing voluntary-sector projects allows donors to avoid relying on inefficient or incompetent developing country bureaucracies to reach local levels (p. 107).

The pentadic analysis of the participatory rural development drama both at the tighter (meeting) and wider (societal) circumferences shows that there is a visible connection between the two. Donors expectations of NGOs to help expand liberal democracy while at the same time maintaining the neo-liberal economic ideal of maintaining efficiency seemed to have influenced the ways the participatory drama played out at the community levels in Ethiopia. On the one hand donors' interest of instilling ideology pushed NGOs to pass decisions on grassroots development by bringing communities to the meeting, at least as part of the scene. On the other hand their requirements of making the most out of the limited resources they channeled through NGOs put pressure on NGOs not to take time and empower communities. This paradox of international aid is in line with the findings of Anderson, Brown and Jean (2012) who have interviewed over 6,000 people in 21 countries (including Ethiopia) who have



received international assistance. They argued there are inherent contradictions and dilemmas between the purpose of international assistance (i.e. “to support people develop their own economy, build their own peace, achieve good governance, and protect their own human rights”) and the ways this ideal is “operationalized in the current aid system” (p. 48). These researchers explained:

Recipients report that the steps taken to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of assistance have increasingly locates analyses, decisions, and choices at the delivery center. As the aid system have become more organized and coordinated at the top, people on the receiving end have seen their own voice curtailed. Many feel that they delivery system objectifies them. Some feel that international actors use their poverty to raise funds, and many say that more precise policies and standardized procedures among aid providers have reduced the space for them, as recipients, to be involved in considering options, weighing alternatives, and developing strategies for their own development.

Also from interviews analyzed in the next chapter, we will see that NGO workers reported that donors want them to show “tangible” results in the shortest possible time. They argued empowering the community by meaningfully engaging them in the process of decision making is the right way to go about doing rural development. The two case NGOs repeatedly argued that they are there for a short time to “empower” the community. They believed NGO-community meetings epitomize community empowerment. They also argued that engaging the community takes a lot of time and patience. The next chapter presents the voices of communities, NGO workers and employees of the local government.

## **CHAPTER 6: ETHIOPIAN'S PERCEPTIONS OF PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT**

This chapter presents the data I collected through interviews. I offer details of participants' understanding of community participation in grassroots development and their reported experiences working with either Oxfam or World Vision. Three voices are represented in this chapter: (1) community residents, (2) NGO workers, and 3) government employees. The purpose of this chapter is to report participants' perceptions of participatory development. The voices of the participants in the three groups will help explain the grassroots' notions of community participation in development. A critical reading of how people talk about and enact participation in their day-to-day life will: 1) illuminate the (dis)similarities between the ways these different groups frame participation, and 2) help to see to what extent the global expert discourses have affected home-grown words for collaborative ways of dealing with challenges participation in the communities studied.

The communities in which I conducted my interviews are part of the "community" Oxfam and World Vision frequently refer to in the community participation discourses they circulate globally. Thus, it is very important to hear the voices of those living in the subject communities and other stakeholders of development like local government partners to understand fully how far the global discourses and the communicative practices on the ground resemble each other.

In addition to the interviews, I will describe stakeholders' meetings on NGO-initiated development issues. I examine the instances in which the phrase "community participation" surfaced in participant discussions and identify the kinds of actions

justified by use of the term "participation." I also explain how participation is implied without explicit use of the term. In chapter seven I will discuss the results of the interviews in juxtaposition with the outcomes of the ideographic analysis and the socio-political basis of participation in Ethiopia discussed in chapter five.

There were a total of 64 participants in this study (51 males and 13 females). I analyzed forty-eight interviews (10 females and 38 males), which were selected by using a quota/representation sampling technique. I would have liked the number of female and male participants to be equal. Since Ethiopia is a predominantly patriarchal society, I did not find many females who take part in discussions over community development issues. Conservative Muslims made up the majority of the residents in the communities I chose to study, which meant that there were relatively few women in the public arena.

I decided to go with forty-eight interviews because new ideas ceased to emerge when I repeatedly read through the transcript of all the 64 interviews. I am confident that there are no major ideas omitted. I used pseudonyms to identify specific participants. Some government officials, scholars and development practitioners at the national level were identified by their names because they did not mind going by their real name. I used pseudonyms to ensure anonymity of community members, NGO staff and some local government experts and officials. The pseudonyms are consistent with names commonly present in the research community. I have not mentioned the names of specific villages. I only use the name of the *woreda*/locality (bigger administrative areas comprising several villages).

In this chapter, I addressed the third and fourth research questions by way of presenting the major themes that emerged from the field study data and supporting them

with exemplar quotations. My third research question asked: *Whose interests are served in actual community interactions with Oxfam and World Vision staff? What communicative roles do experts and citizens have in these interactions?* The fourth question inquired to what extent the spaces in Ethiopia were free for the engagement of communities in public deliberations. I organized interviewees' responses into four main clusters, including: (a) Participants' understanding of social change and their perception of NGO contributions, (b) conceptualizing participation in the social change processes, (c) expert versus citizen voices in deliberations over development, and (d) organizing for social change and spaces for public deliberations in Ethiopia.

In the following sections, I by turn present the views of communities, government personnel and NGO workers in connection with these four thematic clusters.

### **Community Voices: “NGOs are here to help us”**

Community participation and all other related concepts I am studying are grounded in the bigger concept of development or social change. Generally, social change implies some kind of betterment in the traditional form of life of communities. Since the communities NGOs work with are usually "the poorest of the poor" and "marginalized," there are clear needs for positive change in residents' lives. Such demands make it necessary for development actors to intervene.

The community members I interviewed frequently referred to development mainly as the improvement in their economic condition. They want to see their basic needs met. Such needs include sufficient food, health care and rural infrastructure. Expressing their appreciation for the contributions NGOs are making, community

members emphasized the economic side of social change. For example, Gutema, a male coffee farmer in the Limmu Seqqa locality, explained:

Oxfam workers often come to our place and encourage us. There is this very nice girl. She is our mother... They brought us a grain mill. I didn't get one but they also brought us chicken. It is a very good organization. They support us a lot... We are selling our green coffee beans with much better price because of the promotion work they did for us. They have taught us about enhancing coffee quality... They also awarded a few women who did exceptionally well in saving and credit association. I pray that Oxfam stay long here.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, a forty-year-old female coffee grower and one of the leaders of the Lelistu Saving and Credit Association, explained that the price of a kilo (2.2 pounds) of green coffee rose from \$ 0.15 to \$ 0.50 "since Oxfam came" (Mekiya). She was appreciative of the successful advocacy role Oxfam International played in the global arena by demanding fair trade and providing better pay for smallholding farmers. She also talked about the diesel-operated grain mill, which is run by her association, and about some modern bee hives selected farmers got from Oxfam. Referring to the startup of coffee promotion work, Fikadu, a leader of Limmu Enarial Coffee Growers Association reported that Oxfam started to work with the umbrella community-based organization in 2009. He explained:

We [the coffee union] had been producing coffee and distributing improved variety coffee seedlings among our members. We supplied our coffee to the national market. That did not benefit the farmers much. Our study suggested we needed to enter the global market. Getting to the global market and introducing

our coffee happened to be beyond our capacity. We realized that requires a lot of resources. Then, we asked Oxfam to support us in this regard. That is how we started to work with Oxfam.<sup>2</sup>

Another leader of this organic coffee growers association (Sherefa, male) described how the union was able to organize training (e.g., training in business management) and technical support for its seventeen-member association because of the financial and technical backing it has been getting from Oxfam. According to the chairperson, the coffee grown in the Limmu Seqqa locality today is exported as far as the Netherlands and USA. "Especially Starbucks buys most of our coffee," Fikadu explained. I was told that the coffee from this locality was in high demand because it is organic and grown in the shade of tropical forest. What their coffee lacked in the past was quality because they employed traditional methods of processing and storing. Fikadu believed they have come a long distance in that regard partly because of Oxfam's support. Oxfam has reportedly rented a store in Addis Ababa where coffee from Limmu Seqqa area is stored before it is shipped overseas. Oxfam, Fikadu explained, had also hired a professional coffee taster for them. The Chairperson of the Union also told me that the Chocha locality, believed to be the birthplace of coffee, is only seven kilometers (4.3 miles) away from the border of Limmu Seqqa *woreda*.

Community members from the Adama locality expressed their appreciation for both the humanitarian and the development support they received through World Vision. For the most part, participants' descriptions emphasized economic aspects of social change. Junedin, a small scale farmer with a land holding of half a hectare (50 acres), said:

In the past, they [World Vision] had been giving grain to the helpless poor people. They bought cows and chickens from local markets and distributed them among orphans. Some kids got money and purchased cattle... They have supported the needy members of our community in many ways. They are the ones who built a school in this area for the first time. This school is their contribution. They have also built this health station for us. I can't tell you how huge their support has been to people in need.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, Dinka highlights the support he has been getting from World Vision "around HIV" among several things that the organization does in providing aid to the community. He further explained, "It is a very nice organization. For instance, they build schools and give exercise books to children. I can't think of life in this area without World Vision's help."

Some of the community members I interviewed seemed to suggest World Vision's provisions have declined. They would like to see the free handouts and the construction of basic infrastructures continued. Sebokka, 38, explained how a lot of people benefited from the terracing and conservation works World Vision did when they came into the area in 1985. "But now there is nothing like that. What I see them do is just provide kids with exercise books and support orphans go to school," Sebokka said. Thus, we can see that the community participants see NGOs as organizations that came to help them with their unmet economic needs.

### **Conceptualizing Participation**

Generally, community members understand the need to collaborate in social change initiatives. Collaborating is a way of life and survival for them. For instance,

Ababiya believed "community participation is the key for the development of a county."

He further argued,

If I start from a household job, unless every member of the family collaborates, it is pointless that only certain members of the family work hard. By the same token, we have *Idir*, *Eqqub*, and similar associations. If people do not participate in such things, the result will be minimal. For example, only a few people may not be able to finish road work. Whereas, if many people collaborate, the roadwork would be finished and be ready for service.<sup>4</sup>

I asked the community members I interviewed to define "community participation."

None of them said they do not know the concept. The most recurrent feature in their definitions revolve around making labor and material contributions toward local development initiatives. A mother of two kids, Menberu, 23, reported, "We do what we are told to do. For example, we bring wood logs when they tell us to fetch. When there are seedlings planting, we come out and plant. We participate in any way necessary."

Along these lines, Dinka, 35, thought he participates in community development. Asked what participation meant to him and how exactly he takes part, he explained,

"Community participation means people taking part in carrying out labor works. They [World Vision] supports us in different ways and we are ready to support them in chores requiring labor. I work. I work along with the society. Instructions come from them [World Vision]." Participation meant "doing labor activities such as digging ditches and fencing sites" (Ibrahim, 42) and "fetching sand and water for construction works" (Kedir, 40). Yet another participant, Sherefa, 38, thought communities get training and work accordingly. One participant tried to quantify the share of the community's contribution



for local development projects. He said, "If the government supports 70%, the community should work for 30%. This is community participation" (Temam, 48). It is customary in rural Ethiopia to call whoever does development work "government." However, peeling back the outer layers of information, one comes to understand that most of the farmers know who is doing what for them.

Most of the reported experiences of individual community members show that their participation is limited to labor contributions. Owing to very low incomes, financial contributions were rarely reported. Ababiya, 48, mentioned labor, hand tools (e.g., spade, axe) as forms of community contributions and "if there is a possibility of chipping in money, I would also call that participation." Kedir explained, "Mostly we make labor contributions. We made financial contribution only once—when we paid \$0.5 per household when World Vision was working on a potable water project."

A few participants included the contribution of ideas in their definition. For instance, the leader of the Limmu Enaria Coffee Union, Fikadu Urgessa, argued communities are said to have participated "when the idea of planned works comes from the community or when they have their own role, it means that communities participate in the form of money, labor or ideas." Tirhas, 35, brought a gender dimension to the definition of community participation. She claimed, "Community participation includes women. The women should participate on a par with men. For example, women [in the Limmu Seqqa locality] are participating in agriculture, growing coffee and bee hives." Mekiya, a leader of the women's credit association with 107 members, underscored the point in saying, "This association is itself a form of participation. We are participating as women."

Community members had a very modest way of describing their role in development activities for they considered themselves insignificant factors. I asked Menberu if they would contribute ideas during discussions. She replied, "We accept their ideas and implement since we are ignorant. What advice can we give them?" A fellow woman participant, Alemitu, 32, explained they contribute only in the form of labor since "we don't have knowledge to support them in that regard." Alemitu also explained, "We work together when they [World Vision] give us orders." It was hardly possible to come by community members making strong claims that they are the owners and stakeholder of development projects in their locality. They frequently frame their role in such a way that they are there to wait for others to come to the rescue of the community. Lemma blamed such an attitude on the "dependency syndrome" created among his community as a result of many years of free hand outs. "There is no such a thing among the people." Lemma noted, "Ok I am helped today, let me work hard, help myself and give back to the community."

A few participants (e.g., Dinka, Junedin and Sebokka) seem to suggest grassroots organizations have a stronger voice than individual community members. In this regard, Sebokka pointed out, "They [World Vision] usually meet with children's committee members of our village, they don't bring together all of us. They reach the community through the committee." Similarly, Junedin thought only the village committee members have the agency to give "advice" to NGOs. He explained:

We do not need to make suggestions. What they say is acceptable. We just accept and implement. How can we advise them? They are educated people. We ask them questions and they answer. Other than that, what can you advise them to do?

Do they accept if we advise them? They ask us "how is life?" "How is the area doing?" and we tell them about development stuff. ... They consulted us once before, before they embarked on a water project.<sup>5</sup>

I observed from the interviews that some participants preferred to substitute "participation" for "advice" making it sound like a one-way process. This could be because the advice ("gora" in the vernacular Afan Oromo language) is a big part of the culture in the Oromo communities. They have high regard for the elders. They are the ones to give advice and the other community members are there to accept and lead life accordingly. Not accepting or challenging the views of the elders is considered very rude.

Community members talk very little about contributing ideas. There were a few exceptions to this. When I insisted that Ababiya tell me what else, other than contributing labor or money, could be considered participation, he pointed out, "Discussing the importance of things, everybody putting forth their own ideas and reaching consensus is by itself one form of participation."

Some influential community members, who are either elders or better educated, suggested they play some kind of intermediary role. They persuade community members to adopt innovations brought about by NGOs and the government. In this regard, Junedin explained, "We participate based on the guidelines they [World Vision] give us. There are seedlings that they bring. We convince the community to plant them. We also persuade them to try water harvesting and new terracing techniques on their plots."

According to some participants the "guidelines" include formal short-term trainings they received on specific issues of interest. Sebokka explained, "We participate in training organized by World Vision. They pay us per diems and offer training on

agriculture. We learn new things and implement those.” It is important to note the practices of some NGOs in paying community members to come out and take part in meetings and training sessions. According to Coffee Growers’ Union Chairperson, Fikadu, one of the forms Oxfam uses in supporting them is in paying per diems for participants in the workshops and the training the union organizes. From my past experiences and field observations, some of the payments are justified for the NGOs take farmers from different villages to a central place far away from their home. This central place happens to be the nearby small town. In that case, the farmers incur additional costs of lunch and may require transportation.

### **Free Spaces for Public Deliberations?**

In chapter two, I discussed the importance of free space for meaningful deliberations. Free spaces provide ordinary citizens settings to engage in discussions with dignity and independence. Research participants, both from the community and the ranks of NGO workers, were asked for their thoughts about the existence of sufficient free space for deliberations in the two research sites. This section details their responses.

To begin with the community participants, most of them, one way or another, suggested free spaces are either nonexistent or very limited. Almost all the community participants believed they meet to discuss development issues and others with the knowledge of their *kebele* (local government administration office) because "that is the appropriate thing to do" (Ibrahim). Similarly, association leaders were cognizant of the limits on their freedom to get together and discuss. For example, one of the leaders of Lelistu Association indicated, "Normally, the local government office knows we meet every week. Sometimes they come and see how we are doing. Now, we are not expected

to let them know every time we meet." She also explained that new meeting types need to be brought to the attention of the *kebele*. Asked if their association is free from the control of the Kebele, Mekiya replied, "We are free. We go [to the *kebele*] only when they call us." I asked a coffee union leader if his association is free from other institutions including Oxfam and the government. He replied, "We adhere to the rules and regulations of the government. We can't go beyond the rules. There is a line that we can't cross." He was more comfortable explaining their independence from Oxfam. "For example, there was a firm hired by Oxfam to promote the union. We fired the firm because we thought they didn't do the job right."

Association leaders and individual community members never seemed to complain about the lack of free space. They embraced the situation and looked for creative ways to work within the limited spaces. Fikadu reported there are things his association could not do "because of lack of capacity." He thought, "There are a lot of things we can do within the [legal] framework" if they had greater capacity.

From the responses of communities in Adama *woreda*, World Vision's intervention area, I learned that citizens are not as free as the Ethiopian Constitution allows to gather and to talk on issues that matter to them, including development. Alemu, 64, wondered, "Why would we want to meet without their knowledge? Aren't they our administrators?" I brought to his attention the fact the Oromo community had a long tradition of gathering and holding discussions and asked, "Why not now?" His concern was that "there are various political things. We can meet either with them [local government officials] or with their permission."

The government has put five households in a neighborhood together and got them to "elect" their leader. At the time of my field study, the concept was still new and it had not been fully implemented in some places. While "one-to-five" seemed to be a household name, not all people I talked to could articulate its goals very clearly. For example, Kedir, 40, thought one-to-five groupings were introduced to find out, "Who works? How do people spend their days and nights? What kind of movements do they have? In particular, these groups help to identify who does activities that the government doesn't like?" In principle, the five households are supposed to discuss issues, collaborate and seek solutions for challenges facing their neighborhood. Speaking of the purpose of the grouping, Kedir indicated uncertainly, "They say it initiates us for work."

Five or six (depending to vicinity of households) one-to-five groups together form a larger group of 25 or 30 households in a village. When the one-to-five groups are unable to solve problems by themselves, they take it to the issue to the larger group. Junedin, 28, explained:

This group of thirty people [households] has people capable of leading discussions. It also has a secretary. They try their best to find solutions at their level. If it is beyond them, they pass it over to the zone level. The zone has 3-4 leaders. They thoroughly look at the issue and if they find it is tough, they take it to the *kebele* executive committee. This body gets written reports of the efforts made to solve it all the way from one-to-five groups to the zone. They investigate based on the reports.<sup>6</sup>

Community participants suggested these newly introduced structures have been beneficial in trickling down directives. There were no clear cut positions as to whether

they were as effective in passing development challenges and ideas bottom-up. Even if they did, development ideas and concerns would be ignored somewhere down the line as leaders of each groups see themselves mainly as gatekeepers of "peace and political stability." Keble Chairperson, Bikila, 46, claimed the structures help the flow of ideas move both ways "easily." "Whether or not ideas are accepted at higher levels depends on the strength of arguments," Bikila explains. He also argued lower-level groups have the right to refute ideas coming from higher echelons. Kedir's's position seems a bit different on challenging ideas coming from the top:

Since the government is our administrator, we try to implement orders from the government. If we face serious problems of capacity, we would tell them we couldn't do it. When they ask us, "Why didn't you do it?" "How come you were unable to do it?" we explain our reasons. We have no right to simply reject. We have to try our best to accept and then explain to them if we can't.<sup>7</sup>

Asked why rejecting government ideas would not be possible, Kedir explained, "It is the law. It comes from the government."

The significance of traditional grassroots self-help neighborhoods, clans and ethnic groups seem to be undermined after "modern" local structures such as the one-to-five groups have been introduced. I asked some participants why the traditional grassroots structures cannot serve the purpose of one-to-five groups. Tullu, 38, replied, "Times have changed. Today people travel in different directions for work and education. It is difficult for elders to gather them. Even when they [elders] want to share ideas with the community, they should go through the *kebele*."

### **NGO Staff Members' Voices: "We are Empowering Communities"**

Other than the material side of the help community members emphasized, the NGO workers I interviewed seem to recognize the need for blending skills and knowledge of innovations they want to introduce with resources available in the communities with which they work. They define local resources as whatever contributions the communities can make. At least theoretically, these contributions range from ideas/indigenous knowledge to labor and money.

Oxfam personnel describe their organization as a "development and advocacy organization," a "learning organization," that focuses on "value-chain development" that likes to "put women at the heart of" what they do. They claim to closely work with the communities they serve and involve them at all stages of the project cycle. Along the same line, Simret explained, in Oxfam intervention works, "The one thing we promote is dialogues. We help them establish forums at *woreda*, zone and regional levels. We create market groups and make sure the community participate in discussions. In the value chains, right from working the social all the way up, women are there, in significant numbers."

The organization identifies a potential cash crop in the community with which it chooses to work. Having identified this product the organization works from local to international levels to make sure the farmers get improved income selling the product. According to Simret, in developing longer term strategic plans, Oxfam first does "sub-sector analysis" and identifies the most important commercial products that could earn the communities good incomes. Simret explained, "In Oromiya region, for example, Oxfam wanted to work on coffee, sesame and honey. Second-round analysis suggested



coffee would be the most important item." She also indicated that they then identified Limmu Enaria Coffee Union as a potential grassroots-based partner.

Shemsiya, another Oxfam development worker, pointed out that Oxfam has confidence in local organized partners like the coffee union, savings and credit unions, village level government structure (ex. *Kebele*, *got*, etc.) and other community-based units. She indicated, "When there are things we like to pass onto the community, we often go through the development agents [of the government]. They are responsible. But, they have many other commitments. In that case, Oxfam communicates with community members directly." According to Shemsiya, Oxfam employs "top-down as well as bottom-up approaches," while admitting that the top-down approach might be used more frequently. This is the case, as explained by Shemsiya, because "back-donor" interest needs to be taken into consideration. The other reasons she gave was that Oxfam may come to an area having already identified the commodity around which to organize the value-chain development program.

Instead of deploying a large number of its own personnel and a significant amount of resources, Oxfam prefers to work through existing government and community institutions. The staff members believe such an approach is in the interest of efficient use of limited resources and also paves the way for grassroots capacity building. In this regard, Simret had the following to say:

We had limited resources for this coffee project. When we assessed how efficiently and effectively we could use what we had at our disposal, we established what we can leave behind and enhance local potential. Whereas if we were to bring more number of technical staff and do most of the jobs by

ourselves, there may not be much expertise transferred to the areas. That would be a problem for project phase out... we had a similar education program in Benishagul [Gumz] zone, we had project staffs. However, we realized that the area identified was very remote and inaccessible. It was difficult with the 3 or 4 staffs to go to the grassroots level and reach out to all those villages. What we did was appoint the selected villagers as leaders of the school. The students were made to form clubs and engage in cleaning, planting trees and the likes. So if the NGO-sector is to bring about change, increasing the number of its staffs can't be a solution. Grassroots level capacity needs to be built.<sup>8</sup>

Generally NGO workers suggest embracing the idea of engaging grassroots communities in development interventions. However, a close look at how they frame their arguments suggests that they seem to emphasize the economic benefits of involving communities in development programs. They also have concerns about whether or not the project outcomes would be sustained when they pull out of the areas in which they work. There is not much difference between the thoughts of the Oxfam staff and that of World Vision workers. The only difference I noted was that World Vision workers, owing to their Protestant Christian identity, prefer to situate their arguments for philanthropic missions and the rationale for valuing the communities on religious grounds. For example, Tilahun indicated, "The organization [World Vision] is a child-centered, founded on Christ and community-engaging organization. Simply because it has money, it can't jump in and start development work. It consults the community in whatever work it does. This is the policy of the organization." Asked if he feels, as an

Ethiopian, closer to the communities he is working with or with World Vision's values and development policies, Tilahun indicated:

In my view, World Vision belongs to the society. It came to contribute to what the community wanted to achieve. I don't think it [World Vision] has its own identity. I believe it is part of the community because it didn't come to prescribe what should be done. It asked the community 'what should be done?' and crafted programs around those needs."<sup>9</sup>

Similarly, Zerihun, a person holding a key position at World Vision Ethiopia headquarters, explained:

Communities are organized by the government and cultural associations. When going to the community, holding discussions with any [of] these partners would be the first job of any World Vision staff. We believe we can reach the citizens through these community organizations. They know the community better as they interact with them on [a] daily basis.<sup>10</sup>

We see here a very strong effort to blur the organization-community boundary. While the Oxfam staff I interviewed highlighted the economic and project sustainability advantages, World Vision staff felt the reason for involving grassroots communities seems to have less to do with economic efficiency. In the case of the two study sites, World Vision had considerably more financial and other resources than Oxfam did. Historically, World Vision started in many places with humanitarian supplies then moved on to rehabilitating famine-stricken communities, mainly handing out agricultural tools, oxen and seeds for free. These past trends, Binyam claims, might have negatively affected the development practices today. He explained, "This is a typical dependency

syndrome that developed during the worst Ethiopian famine of the mid 1980s. The relief periods are followed by some kind of rehabilitation which focuses on farmers to get their own food and rehabilitating the environment that has been devastated by the drought." According to Binyam, those practices of handouts made communities believe NGOs are there "just to give something." This is consistent with the dissatisfaction some community participants expressed over reduced NGO "activities."

In the preceding sections, we have seen how NGO workers, beneficiary communities and government personnel described social change and the role of NGOs in such development initiatives. Since each party has its own interests and approaches to development, noting some differences in their conceptualization may not come as a surprise.

### **Discursive Construction of "Community"**

The discussion of "community participation" should start with an examination of how NGO workers describe "the community." I was intrigued by the question "who is the community?" I discovered that different research participants have different ways of conceptualizing "community." Some NGO staff described communities as made up of those "who own the development programs" whereas other thought communities are those "targeted" by development programs initiated by NGOs. Even the idea of "target" varied from individuals to households to people inhabiting a given geographic area, usually the *woreda* (the smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia with full presence of government structures). For example, for Abreham, communities are "people who inhabit a certain geographic area and have similar culture and values." He went on to explain his organization, World Vision, usually assumes there is one community in a *woreda*. "At

regional program offices and national levels, World Vision serves multiple communities which have differences." Abreham also explained how they consider government appointees in the grassroots administration as community representatives, even when they know these appointees do not always reflect community interests. "These officials are recognized by the government. Since we follow government structures, we consider them as representatives of the community." He also made distinctions between the current practices and what he believed would be the ideal situation. "There is a certain gap. I think it would have been better if the community participates directly."

Other NGO workers seem to consider not only government officials, but also other community-based organizations such as farmer's cooperatives and unions, "even if they were established following government prescriptions" (Solomon, Oxfam), as community representatives. Solomon argued, "Even if the government controls them closely and used them to influence the people, we know that they have relative independence on non-political issues."

Oxfam field staff member, Shemsia, brought up yet another factor to consider in identifying "the community." According to Shemsia, international NGOs have their own interest and when they choose a community they want to work with, they study whether the area is "a potential." Further explaining this concept, she said, "For example, when we [Oxfam] first came to this area, our interest was in value chain development." In this case, their community would be those farmers growing coffee. She suggested that "food security issues" might be another defining factor when NGOs pick a community. Another Oxfam staff, Solomon, agrees with Shemsia on the cash crop-based definition of

community. In the context of areas of which he is in charge “communities are all sesame farmers” in the *woreda*.

I would say, World Vision's area development programs set their feet in highly food insecure *woredas* of the country. For World Vision, communities are those people who are "primary" and "secondary" beneficiaries of development programs (Head, World Vision Ethiopia Planning Department). A grassroots-based staff member, Wondwosen, explained, "In the language of development, the community is the target beneficiaries (both primary and secondary) of the programs. For example, when World Vision does [development] works, the target beneficiaries are children and their parents." It is not clear whether all children in an area World Vision is focusing upon are equally benefitting from all programs. From observing how things work in the locality, I determined there was an intentional effort to target sponsored-children<sup>11</sup> and their parents rather than the non-sponsored child families.

From the discourses of the NGOs one gets the sense that "the community" is a homogenous group of people. Further looking at their programs in the localities where I chose to conduct my field research, I came to realize Oxfam tried to empower women whereas World Vision focused on the wellbeing of children. Ironically, community groups had very little say in the deliberations and resultant development decisions, especially in the case of World Vision's "child-centered" programs.

---

<sup>11</sup> According to World Vision International's official website ([www.worldvision.org](http://www.worldvision.org)), volunteers pay \$30/month and help provide a child in need with access to life-saving basics like health, food, clean water education etc.... In return the sponsors get the chance to personally connect with the sponsored child through letters, email and cards.

### **Is Community Participation being “Adulterated?”**

The NGO workers I talked to had no doubt that community participation is a noble ideal and a recipe for success in grassroots development. Not surprisingly, both staffs at headquarters and in the field recite the literature of community participation precisely. Some of them mentioned the enlightenment comes from their exposure to a wide range of development literature and training. For instance, Solomon described community participation as "the effort to help communities develop the feeling that they own the outcomes of development activities and engage them in initiating ideas to running and managing projects in the absence of NGOs." He underlined that strategies may vary from one organization to another. The ultimate goal, according to Solomon, is "to enable the community to stand on its feet, own and manage development's undertakings." Likewise, Simret of Oxfam argued, "The community has to be the priority-setter, decision-maker, and the designer of the foundations of its own development." She further noted:

The community needs to have ownership. What I call participation is not some nominal practices of talking about it in project narrations and reports. I think it is the endeavor to identify what needs a community has, how best do they want to address it, why do they want to do it that way and what kinds of changes do they want to see in their life. I think such moves would result in sustainable changes. The impact of development programs should be measured not by the amount of money put into it, but by how far the community owned the works, how well they managed it. The concept of participation includes everything from identifying and prioritizing needs to ownership.<sup>11</sup>

Simret's views attest to the existence of a thing called "nominal" community participation at least in report and grant narrations.

World Vision staff members are not much different in their way of framing community participation. Starting with experts at the national office, Anteneh described the essence of community participation as "understanding communities, their needs and facilitating conditions for them whereby they participate according to their interests and capabilities to fill their own gaps." This is such an interesting framing because it adds the need for "understanding communities" to the previous descriptions. It also suggests that the NGO's role should be limited to "facilitating conditions" for communities so that they willingly contribute what is within their level of expertise. According to Anteneh, "This [way of looking at community participation] is what makes us believe the community will carry on with started programs even if external actors stop." For Binyam, community participation is a rewarding process, which is worth pursuing. Despite the rhetoric, admits Binyam, there are often no objective indicators and standards against which we can measure whether communities have actually fully participated at all levels. He went on to argue:

Sometimes taking part in meetings and giving labor contributions are considered community participation. However, participation is wider than that. Why do communities participate at all? For me, participation implies inclusiveness. Participation is a matter of letting the owner of the development own the entire process itself because this is a rewarding process which will guarantee the output of the process will continue through time to benefit people who are living in a specific community. Therefore, the concept of participation is being adulterated,



adulterated in the sense that the concept is externalizing the real owners of the development itself. It is the initiators of the development who are inviting the community at will so that they would be included. Communities are sometimes not asked for their opinion whether they would like to participate in this or that. Because communities are in most cases powerless. They don't have the ability or the choice to refuse participation. Therefore, through time, the definition of participation, the standard of participation and the content of participation and the level of participation itself has been dictated by the initiators of the development projects. Sometimes it becomes a fashion, a catchword or a cliché in the development literature or in the development academia. Those who don't know what participation implies talk about it and community members become a timid, humble, powerless lookers who are there to be called upon only when the time permits, only when the condition is conducive for the development initiators, be it NGOs or any kind of organization that claims to support any kind of development. So the problem here is in the first place the concept is wrongly understood both by the recipients of the development and by those who claim to come to the rescue of the poor communities. To conclude my comment on this question, sometimes I feel that participation itself doesn't exist. It is something toward which we should aspire, one we have not achieved yet. Sometimes it becomes not an objective reality but a goal towards which we should aspire.<sup>12</sup>

This critical reflection, among others, raised important questions of: 1) ownership of the entire process, no matter who initiates development schemes, 2) whether or not

---

<sup>12</sup> This interview was conducted in English. These are the exact words of the participant.

participants are asked for their desire to participate, and 3) who possesses the power to control and decide on the meaning and nature of participation. It is ironic that the "owner" of the outcome of development programs does not have power over the process. Binyam suggested owning the entire process is rewarding. It is not clear in what sense. He seems to suggest participation also implies some psychological aspects such as the quest for recognition and dignity.

World Vision grassroots development facilitator, Tilahun, agrees with Binyam that participation is a concept larger than how it is usually conceived. The way he frames his argument for participation is indicative of where the locus of power resides:

Community participation is a very wide concept. Participation is development by itself. Participation is a work done to enable communities' own development projects undertaken by organizations. Community participation is target groups' participation in development in the form of ideas, materials and owning the outcome. In the case of World Vision and any other organization, I do not believe any development in which the community doesn't participate will be sustainable. Involving the community at any rate is beneficial. Involving the community in planning, in generating, in participating in the implementation, in evaluation and later involving them in taking over the works is development by itself.<sup>12</sup>

It sounds like communities participate at the will of the development initiators, as Binyam pointed out earlier. In this description of the essence of participation, the framing seems to privilege development initiators when it comes to possessing the power to make decisions. This is very important when the field-level workers are the actual implementers of whatever ideal policy of community participation an organization may

have. Consistent with this view, Wondwosen, a manager of grassroots programs, claims that the "understanding of program goals declines as you go down to grassroots level." "This is the case," according to Wondwosen, "with both government partners and World Vision staffs." It is important to note that there are differences even among grassroots level development actors in their conception of participation. For example, Abreham explained that participation includes, "enabling communities to critically analyze their situations and come up with their own plans" of development. "Enabling communities" is a frame different from "involving" them at the will of a certain party. The other dimension Abreham adds to the description of community participation is that "the community" is a heterogeneous group. "The participation can vary according to age. We should engage children in child-focused activities and do the same for others and let them pass through this process and help them reach the level where they can manage the project." In my view, this is a major departure from the discourses that commonly give the impression that "the community" is a homogenous group of people.

There seems to be agreement among the NGO workers I interviewed that the concept of community participation has not been received by all development stakeholders in the exact same way. Part of the lack of clarity, according to some participants, comes from the tricky nature of the term "participation." For example, Solomon thought the term is "open to different interpretations" like many other concepts in development. He appeared to suggest there is a range of levels of participation. High-level World Vision official, Zerihun, explained Solomon's range of participation further:

Only because some community members aired out their opinions, some people think they participated. On the other hand, there are situations whereby

communities make active involvements in the form of ideas, materials, management, monitoring to the end and see their ideas go all the way to the last goal.

The other source of misconception of participation, according to some participants, emanate from the way community participation is framed. Despite the discourse of "community ownership of outcomes of development," Anteneh argued that "community participation" is problematic:

It appears that everybody has grasped the concept of community participation. When it comes to practical facilitation, you start to see different people understood it differently. They say there is participation simply because they called some community members to attend meetings. Only because they told the community at the end what they did, they think there is participation. We heard about the word participation and we talk about it. Who owns the thing? And who invites you to participate? In my view, the participants may not own it. If they are willing to commit to certain things, they are considered participants. If communities are "participants" in this sense, then who is to own development? In my view, the community should extend the call for invitation. The community should start to demand additional skills and call upon others to come and participate. Communities should go to the extent of engaging the government and other actors and demanding them to do this and that for them.<sup>13</sup>

### **Swearing by “Community Participation”**

NGO workers believe they understand the advantages of consulting communities on every issue of development in their locality and that they also pioneered participatory

development in Ethiopia. Along these lines, Simret pointed out, "There is a better understanding about participation in the NGO sector than in other sectors." They swear by "community participation." For example, Tilahun (World Vision field staff) thought, "Community participation is the beginning of any work and any relationship." This view might be informed by the popular verse of the Bible, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). Wondwosen said that they embrace community participation because it is "true." "It is a necessary input for any development in any condition," he further noted.

One of the arguments NGO workers made for the need for community participation is that it is germane to the collectivistic lifestyle of the communities they serve. In this regard, Simret argued, "When you see our communities, most of the social activities are carried out in collaboration with other members of the society. That is how our culture is. For example, if you look at funerals and weddings people organize themselves and come out in big numbers to support." Similarly, Tilahun posited:

I grew up on a farm. My parents are farmers. Growing up, I learned how important it is to consult with community members. I have also seen projects undertaken without the participation of the community fail. It is way different when you tell me about what you want to achieve right from the beginning and when you just embark on development work. If you are to make me like what you do, make me trust you and ensure what you do is going to succeed, then it is a must that I participate.<sup>14</sup>

Arguments for participation as a home-grown concept is interesting and has some elements of truth. However, it is difficult to conclude contemporary practices of

community participation are necessarily the extensions of the long-standing culture of community collaboration in Ethiopia. Simret seemed unsure of her argument when she later said, "Whether it has its roots in our culture or knowledge passed to us from outside, the advantages of community participation is well established in Ethiopia."

Looking at a brief historical account of community participation in the context of World Vision Ethiopia, Anteneh pointed out:

It takes us back to 1986. That was when it [participation] started under the name of community-based technical program. The need for community participation surfaced out when some development facilitators got a six-month training. It was the time of rehabilitation and transition to development. It was believed involving the victims of famine was a necessary, sustainable and cost-effective way. Even if the approach got accepted by the organization and the community, other actors considered it a waste of time and not a cost-effective mode of operation. It was only later that it got appreciated globally [and] became a norm.<sup>15</sup>

Apparently, the very idea of community participation as we know it today is brought to the attention of Ethiopian NGO workers through their foreign colleagues in the form of training. It is important to note how organizational discourses of community participation in the 1980s emphasized the idea of cost-effectiveness.

The other, and by far the most frequent, argument NGO workers made for community participation revolves around concepts of "sense of ownership" and "sustainability." Almost every one of the NGO workers I interviewed explained the disadvantages of top-down approaches. For example, Shemsia highlighted, "If you prescribe things in a top-down manner, they may accept it because it gives them a

temporary benefit. But the outcome will not sustain and they do not develop a sense of ownership." Further explaining the dangers of not getting the consent of the community, Anteneh had the following to say:

A lot of development works could not sustain. Sometimes communities themselves are the cause for short service and even damage. This is because, for one thing they don't know enough about the projects and second, the external people do works in a manner which is not necessarily consistent with the existing values, norms, individual and society's needs.<sup>16</sup>

Asked what one would see in a community that fully participated on a project, Tilahun answered, "We would not see people that say, 'we don't know', we see a community that considers the works their own and protects them. We see projects run well even after NGOs left the area."

Community members are supposed to develop "the sense of ownership" because of the emotional attachment they develop as they pass through the process of participation, contributing ideas and influencing decisions. The NGO workers often do not make distinctions between the types of participation that helps community members develop a sense of ownership from those "participatory approaches" that do not. Intentionally or unintentionally, they seemed to suggest every approach to development, which claims to be "participatory," is rewarding to the community.

Asked if they embrace community participation because it is politically correct, most of the participants answered "no" and tried to show why they firmly believe in the nobility of this approach to development. Two or three participants suggested the possibility of including participation without believing in it. For example, Anteneh

explained, "It is possible that parties who say they engage communities may not believe in participation. They say it because it is considered politically right or because others require us to reflect that. But, it is usually hard to discern the true position of people on this." The reason for not having authentic commitment for participation, according to Wondwosen, may also come from lack of full understanding of the concept and also from evoking participation to further their own interests.

Participants also talked about how important it is for NGOs to empower communities before they leave (Abreham, Zerihun). According to Zerihun, NGOs and other civil organizations stay in an area for a limited time. He went on to explain:

Primarily it is the community that carries on development. And, it is not believed communities sustain life or generations simply because of external support.

Therefore, we want communities to participate as the development programs need to go on. This, for one thing, helps us conduct the development work [with] minimum cost. Secondly, things will be more sound and better facilitated when community members are in charge of the program management. Third, when the NGOs leave, the community will proceed with the innovations the NGOs brought. That is why the participation and empowerment of the community becomes desirable.<sup>17</sup>

Zerihun also mentioned that donors are concerned about what happens to projects when they quit funding them. They demand that NGO program planners have "phase out strategies." As a consequence, donors push the community participation agenda.

NGO Workers' Description of Community Participation Practices in Ethiopia



The preceding sections presented NGO workers' views on the concept of community and the rationale for community participation. In the following sections, I have summarized their assessment of the community participation practices in Ethiopia in general and their experiences with the localities in which they work in particular. First, I present the voices of Oxfam staffs and then World Vision staffs' views will follow.

Solomon of the Oxfam UK Ethiopia office staff put the organizational stakes in community participation in three broad categories. The first group comprises mainly such institutions as governments that have "political motives" and which use participation as "a tool to mobilize communities" and make them serve government interests. He explained "participation" could be used to legitimize the government's act of soliciting political loyalty and contributions in the form of labor, materials and money. This suggests that the government's interest may not necessarily reflect the best interest of communities. In fact, this is a possible scenario for non-democracies. According to Solomon, the second group that promotes community participation consists of civil society organizations. In engaging communities, he explained, "I don't believe most of these organizations have a goal larger than ensuring sustainability of projects built using donor money." As a senior person who served in three international NGOs including Oxfam and World Vision, he looked back to how they handled community participation and reflected:

NGOs that are implementing programs locally sometimes, knowingly or unknowingly, enact participation in a manner that totally contradicts with its original spirit. I can cite examples. If you take one of the organizations [he mentioned the name] I worked with in the past, mostly we conceived ideas, we

wrote plans, and wanted the community to endorse them. We took care of assessment and other stuff and reported to donors there was full community participation.<sup>18</sup>

Solomon suggested pseudo participatory practice is a thing of the past, at least from his personal point of view. By implication, through time and working for various NGOs, he got a chance to educate himself. He indicated yet another organization he worked for in the past did an exemplary job of community participation. Solomon argued such organizations, even if few in number, employed a rights-based and good governance-focused approach to development. These organizations, according to Solomon, consider communities as rightful parties. "Communities participate all the way from clicking the very first idea to the follow up and taking over responsibility and running projects when the NGO leaves." These are the types of organizations that Solomon put in the third category. He further argued that these types of organizations:

Create awareness to communities and encourage them to claim their rights on crucial political issues. This enables participations to be real. There is absolute belief in community's ability to be a part of a development program, right from the beginning to the end. The communities involve in everything including materials purchasing and negotiating with the local government to get land for projects such as school construction. Organizations stand aside and see things don't go off track because of lack of experience and expertise. They limit their participation in providing necessary, limited finance and filling knowledge gap.<sup>19</sup>

In this discourse, we notice that communities are moved to the center, while experts working for NGOs seemed to stand in the periphery and wait until their assistance is

sought by the community. This is, obviously, diametrically opposite of the dominant discourses, which bring organizations to the center and make the community look like it is helplessly waiting outside to be invited in by organizations.

Another Oxfam staff member, Simret, described the steps her organization followed to engage local coffee farmers in enhancing the quality of organic coffee to meet world standards, thereby raising their income. She said they started by conducting an assessment of opportunities and challenges. The assessment included holding discussions with local government staffs and community members such as leaders of coffee unions. One of the challenges, according to Simret, was the "knowledge gap." Oxfam helped launch a "functional adult literacy program" with a curriculum that integrated basic reading and writing skills with quality coffee production. Simret reported, "When this project went operational, we saw a significant change. There has been regular discussions between stakeholders. This shows, our working closely with and engaging the community has paid off." Simert described what Oxfam has been able to promote:

We promote dialogues. We encourage them [communities] to establish forums at *woreda*, zonal and regional levels and grassroots market groups. Significant numbers of women are included in the discussions at all levels of the value chain starting from working the soil. Women are still not getting a fair share of the benefits. Some resistances surfaced during discussions. Some didn't believe taking part in credit and saving associations is right for the women. Meetings and discussions helped resolve such tensions. Then we helped them see the

opportunities available to them. As we play more facilitation roles, they start to open up and come to the right track.<sup>20</sup>

From this description, we can see that dialogues do not necessarily result in consensus. They might get participants into thorny areas and even conflicts. However, the development process would be healthier when the tensions are allowed to come out. In this particular case, a great majority of the women and, of course, their partners were hesitant about saving money and getting dividends as their Muslim faith does not permit such practices.

Overall, Oxfam staff from headquarters to field believed their organization works very closely with communities. Shemsia, a member of the Oxfam grassroots staff, shared the views of her organization's headquarters staff in regard to community participation practices:

In this specific area, the [coffee] union, which is considered representative of the community, is our closest ally. There are primary associations' representatives under the union. They participate from project design to monitoring. Also the donor and implementing organizations<sup>13</sup> take part during project design. We implement projects together. Therefore, I think the communities have a certain amount of participation.<sup>21</sup>

As she later indicated, community participation is minimal when it comes to policy issues. "Policy level discussions include Oxfam, the union and necessary government parties. The changes are communicated to the larger community down the line." The

---

<sup>13</sup> Sometimes Oxfam contracts out some work like the adult literacy program to local implementing organizations such as Adult and Non Formal Education Association in Ethiopia (ANFEAE).

impression I got from her description is that she thinks deliberations on policy issues require some kind of expertise.

As far as Oxfam is concerned, the bottom line, according to Solomon, "philosophically, there is an uncompromised [positive] stand on participation," however, the practice may vary. One variation, he argued, comes from whether the intervention is humanitarian or development per se. He reported life saving rather than participation is the goal in the case of humanitarian intervention, whereas they play a "facilitative role" in their value chain development program to ensure participation of the farmers. Some of the NGO workers I interviewed preferred to resort to principles even when asked to comment on the actual practices of public deliberations in their organizations. In the next sub-section, we see that community participation experiences of World Vision are not much different from that of Oxfam.

Moving on to World Vision, most of the staff I interviewed believed their organization, by and large, engages "partners" in all its grassroots development work. They argued that there is participation at all stages of the project cycle because "the [organization's] guideline orders" them to involve communities (Zerihun). Zerihun further explained:

We are doing things as per the requirements of the guideline. When we do plans, we don't include anything the community doesn't want. However we may not have enough resources enough to be able to address all their needs. In that case, they are made to prioritize and agree on what things to include in plans. They participate at every stage. There is a good tradition of information exchange. We sit down with them and discuss implementation of programs. We evaluate our

projects with the community twice—the first one is midterm evaluation and the second one is terminal.<sup>22</sup>

According to Zrihun there is an optimal level of community participation in the areas in which World Vision works in Ethiopia. The first thing World Vision staffs reportedly do is contact "partners" which are groups organized by the government or other community-based cultural units. Then they "reach the community through them" (Zerihun). Zerihun indicated they strengthen existing groups and "organize them in new groups and make them discuss thematic issues such as HIV/AIDS." He also reported that the community would "bring their own agenda and discuss them." Wondwosen agrees with other study participants; "there is a significant amount of [community] participation during planning and targeting," which he claims to be "better than what we can see with other NGOs." Next, according to his ranking, is participation in the form of "labor and material." He thought, "World Vision is weak when it comes to involving communities in monitoring and evaluation." If done at all, according to Wondwosen, it is usually taken care of by World Vision and government experts. Field office level worker, Abrehm, thought that they failed to reach an "optimal" level of community achievement. He explained, "They participate in bringing their challenges to our attention and indicating what needs to be done for them. But, still, I don't think we are fully participating with the community. I have a feeling we are doing less than what is expected of us."

The dominant view of the World Vision staff is that community members actively participate in contributing money, material and labor, which usually add up to ten per cent of a project's cost. It is not clear whether these are imposed on communities or they do them voluntarily. Abreham explained:

In the context of our ADP [Area Development Program], they [the community] contribute up to 5%. For example, out of what it would cost us to construct a secondary school in five years, 5-7% of the cost is the share of the community.

There is a trend of taking part in labor - when we do water projects. But, there are challenges with the behavior of the community. They don't organize themselves.

They don't take initiatives. Sometimes, the *woreda* [government] experts need to come down and get them [to] work. They should have taken the initiative to do things as per the frames we provide them. I think there has to be improvement in this regard.<sup>23</sup>

The involvement of communities in "policy issues" was seemingly limited because the government policy "is not conducive for international NGOs to directly participate in certain areas" (Zerihun). Intentionally or otherwise, the argument for lack of community participation in policy formulation is flawed. It has nothing to do with the restriction the Ethiopian Legislation put on international NGOs not to directly get involved in "certain areas," which include human rights and other political issues such as voter education. Wondwosen admits, "I could not say there has been community participation on policy deliberations. I have not seen one." Likewise, Abreham reported, "World Vision does the policies. So far, I haven't seen the community participating in this regard." Abreham indicated policies are crafted at "regional, national and [international] partnership office levels." Wondwosen puts the responsibility on the shoulders of the government. He argued that the "main owner" of the development process--the government--usually prioritizes timely political issues on the development agenda. In that case, communities are forced to shift focus to the thing of the moment advanced by the

government. Apparently, they have time to participate in planning, targeting and making money and labor contributions, but have no time for conceptual level deliberations on the things that matter to them. There seems to be a consistent and inherent view that community members are unqualified for policy discussion. In addition, people prefer to stay away from policy discussions as such dialogues are viewed as "political" and thus the province of the government.

Staff members, who thought there was community participation, cited community "commenting" on policies already formulated as examples of community participation (Bayush; Tilahun). According to Tilahun, "Policies come and are commented on. Mostly the policies are well formulated. Still the comments of the community will be included."

Another field worker, Tilahun believed there are situations, even if limited, where community members' ideas were taken seriously by the organization. He argued, "I have seen when a five-year document was changed to accommodate community suggestions. There are instances where ideas came from the grassroots level got accepted at higher levels." He seemed to contradict himself when he later said, "Their participation is not much when it comes to initiating development ideas. But they can comment on what is proposed." World Vision community worker Bayush remembered, "Even before I joined World Vision, World Vision had a plan to build a school. The community said they wanted water first and the plan was changed." I wondered how the plan was originally formulated if the community were able only to make some changes. Despite the claims of "working closely" with the community, the discourses of NGO workers tend to draw a different and more complex picture. The responses of both the community members and



World Vision staff did not speak to the permeability of the boundary between them and community consensus building.

### **Donors and the Local Government: Partners and Challenges**

NGO participants discussed both the opportunities and challenges for community participation in Ethiopia. Simret (Oxfam) reported that her organization has tried to put in place basic principles and conditions for participation (e.g., commitment expressed in policies). She thought their achievements in that regard are encouraging. However, she acknowledged the fact that there are some gaps in the implementing of policies. "For example, we didn't get a chance to engage all government structures at the *woreda* level because of various reasons." She also admitted they did not work very closely with women's associations. "We spent most of our time working with the [coffee] union."

Shemsia agrees with Simret that Oxfam's desire to engage the community is apparent. She is appreciative of the level of collaboration between them and their partners (especially given the short life of the project in the area). Yet, Shemsia explained that situations on the ground are far from perfect, despite the organizational stance stipulated in key documents. Among the challenges she identified, the one that stands out is shortage of manpower. She is the only Oxfam staff member stationed in the area. Other experts occasionally make brief visits from headquarters for meetings and training. To cope with this situation, the organization reportedly reaches the community through the union, associations and government development facilitators. Shemsia indicated, "More direct contact with the community would create better understanding, thus earning us better trust. I understand getting the voices of the community through representatives might hide real concerns and issues from our sight." Simret does not necessarily see the

lack of personnel as a challenge. For her, it is a strategic choice the organization has made. She argued, "You can't reach all villagers with Oxfam staffs, no matter how many you have there. If NGOs are to bring about any change, they should develop grassroots level capacity. It is much better to empower communities and develop leaders locally."

Like Simret, Shemsia would have preferred the participation of women to be better than what it is at the moment. She observed, "The men are empowered economically and socially. They can express their ideas openly. The women are not yet there. The start is good. But I think there is more work to do. They have not started to fully utilize their potential."

NGO participants from World Vision highlighted the amicable relationships they had forged with communities over their 20-year presence in the area, as an opportunity for community participation (Anteneh; Wondwosen). They also thought World Vision understood community interests because of its experience and the rigorous assessment processes they go through before embarking on projects. Some of the staff considered personnel on the ground (both World Vision's community workers and government development facilitators) as assets necessary to trigger community participation. For example, Wondwosen mentioned that the government assigns agriculture and health sector junior experts. These experts together with development committees established by World Vision (e.g., child wellbeing committee) make grassroots deliberations possible. Wondwosen further explained, "We use those grassroots structures a lot. We select direct beneficiaries of projects with them. We also present our plans to them before

implementing them." Similarly, Anteneh sees community structures such as one-to-five groups<sup>14</sup> as "resources."

Commenting on the nature of the community in Adama *woreda*, Tilahun indicated they are close to the major urban center of Adama and, hence, could respond to development initiatives positively and quickly. "Since they live in the Rift Valley, they lived most of their time under moisture stress. They have been struggling as a result of crop failure. So they appreciate any support NGOs may extend."

According to participants, fostering communities' positive attitudes toward development and favorable conditions for participation are not without challenges. One such challenge is that NGO development practitioners either do not have "the skills necessary to make participation" (Anteneh) or they lack a "commitment" to it (Abreham). Participants agree there are differences among staff members when it comes to knowledge of the culture and norms of the community. Abreham argued, "Unless one is able to identify how things work [within] the community, what cultural practices are holding them back and what opportunities are there, it is very difficult to engage them in helpful conversations." In addition to differences in the skills and passion of individual staffs, Wondwosen pointed out the high staff turnover is a problem for the continuation of participatory processes. "Staffs don't stay here long enough to see initiatives take root. People get transferred by the time they start to know the community better."

---

<sup>14</sup> One-to-five groups are the smallest community structures within a group of five households in a neighborhood that is monitored/coordinated by one household head among them. Some critics think the Ethiopian government created these structures in the years following the contested 2005 elections for political control while others see these groups as good ways to reach grassroots communities and coordinate them for the development of their neighborhood.

Though donors make grassroots development possible in Ethiopia, their requirements put pressure on NGO implementation practices. Anteneh explained, "We [World Vision] work with the community. But in most cases, [NGOs] may do some activities only to meet donor demands. It is difficult if you want to see a measurable community participation." Anteneh further explained how donors could put pressure on program implementing NGOs. "If there is firm organizational stand and if you do facilitation in a non-donor-driven, non-budget-driven way and give it time, whatever time it takes, skills will change." According to Anteneh:

There is tension here. There is a need for development on the one hand. There is also a need to use resources and report to donors in time. It is difficult to make the fast outcomes sustainable because we need to ask how long it takes the society to understand new ideas. Sometimes, it might take ten years. Sometimes it takes five years. They may have confusions about the thing we take to them. When we ask them to let go the old habits and adopt the new ideas, they may find it challenging. In my view, working with the community and teaching them gradually is the best way to go about it.<sup>24</sup>

NGO workers indicated an apparent tension between donor reporting requirements and the long time it takes to start to see any meaningful change in communities. This tension appears to have led NGOs to do "development" too quickly and produce reports that please their donors.

Participants emphasized that not all donors are the same. Most of them are there, "not to just donate" (Binyam). They have their own motives. According to Binyam, "They are not absolutely free from the inspection of others." The sources of funding

could be governments, UN agencies, the World Bank and other big agencies. These agencies, according to Binyam, have their own requirements, regulations and standards put in place to monitor all kinds of societies and charities. Binyam argued:

NGOs are attached to multiregional corporations, which may have a kind of political interest. Some donors do it out of religious commitment. Take for example the Vatican agencies like Kuwait Development Fund. Donors are actually diverse. They have the criteria on the basis of which they provide funding. They also set the criteria for mode of operation. They set the criteria for mode of reporting. Some of these criteria don't tally with the objective reality that we see in the NGO operation areas. Do they have vested interest or not this question is very important because, there is financial transaction between donors and NGOs. So, within this sense whether we like it or not the concept of participation becomes [a] political issue. Any NGO that receives funds from any specific donor is not free from the ideology or political stand of the donors.

On the community side, there are some reported challenges for participation. These, according to participants include frustrations with repeated natural disasters and resistance to new development initiatives (Abreham), lack of coordination and consistency of effort. NGO staffs give to local government the responsibility to coordinate contributions and deal with duplication of effort. They also hold the government accountable for narrowing the sphere of deliberations and for focusing on "timely" political issues like elections and fertilizer debt collections. Wondwosen indicated, "In principle, the government claims to be open for grassroots discussions. When it comes to practical situations, they are very skeptical. You are free to talk as long

as the idea is [in] line with government interest." He mentioned the challenges with dealing with particularly issues of rights (e.g., child rights).

### **Free Deliberative Spaces for NGOs to Engage Communities?**

Whereas both Oxfam and World Vision have internal organizational structures, they recognize government structures and work through them to reach grassroots communities. The Oxfam field officer mainly works through the coffee union and associations (including women's associations) to reach out to individual farmers. World Vision has a community worker in each *kebele*. In addition they have set up committees (i.e. child committee, HIV/AIDS committee). Still they work in harmony with the government structure.

Simret sees the government structures as more of a positive development. No matter what the intent of the government was, she thought these structures could be used to mobilize the government and create awareness. "If used properly," Simret argued, "the structures will provide more facilitating conditions. As long as there is an enabling environment, NGOs can use the structures to engage communities and promote development interventions." Another Oxfam staff member, Solomon, thought community-based organizations have autonomy, which is enough for them to engage communities on "economic development." He further explained things get more complex when it comes to political issues such as elections. However, drawing the line between economic and political issues is not always easy.

Solomon observed that the culture of meetings in its modern sense has developed over the last three decades owing to the government's socialist-orientation. However, he

noted, "How far the forums were open and who sets the agenda and who controls the direction of the discussions remains dubious."

World Vision staffs had mixed feelings about the nature of deliberative spaces at the grassroots level. For example, Binyam indicated that the government has already organized communities from village level up to the district level. He argued, "It takes a lot of time to persuade" the local government bodies to say "yes" to World Vision staff's desire to reach out to the community. The success of the persuasive effort, according to Wondwosen, also depends on individual government officials' level of understanding of the process of development. For Zerihun, the issue of space for development facilitation goes beyond administrative levels. He thought the policy [NGO legislation] makes the space of operation limited especially for international NGOs. Zerihun talked about his organization as having been creative enough in using the limited spaces (e.g., by working with and through partners including community-based organizations (CBOs) and government offices). Further strengthening Zerihun's views, Wondwosen argued:

The NGOs are here to provide an additional hand to the government in promoting development. If the government is able to create [a] conducive policy atmosphere and engage its partners better, I think it is possible to do much better things.

Mostly the practice in our country is that the government prioritizes its political interest. Development usually follows the political heat. The current NGOs law is meant to control NGOs activities and it is currently going into force. If the development agenda is believed to be in conflict with the political interest, the government stops it. Such things pose a challenge to development.<sup>25</sup>

We can infer from this description that the space for public deliberations widens or narrows depending on the issue to be discussed. Issues that are of less interest to the government have minimal chance to be discussed publicly. It may not be always possible to make clear boundaries between purely economic and purely political issues as these two often overlap. In principle, deliberations should be open and be allowed to go in any direction where the root causes and solutions of the development challenge lie.

Wondwosen cited advocating for child rights as one area his organization wants to engage in. However, the government has reportedly made it clear this responsibility should be left to the government. Restrictions on the issues to be discussed and how far the discussions can go narrow the space for deliberation.

Several other World Vision staff members believed government skepticism of NGOs grassroots acts does not make the situation all bleak. Anteneh posited, "We have worked with the community even during the time of communism." He wondered, "If we don't use either the government structures or indigenous ones, are we going to create totally new ones?" He thought the one-to-five structures could still be used. What matters, according to Anteneh, is "what packages and agenda we take to those five households." Similarly, *Woreda* and *kebele* level World Vision staffs reported using creative approaches to go around the rule and pass messages to community members. For example, Bayush talked about how government officials sometimes do not mind allowing them to gather in communities because they have interest in the resources her organization brings. She also explained that she would call opinion leaders in the community to her office and would tell them important information. According to Bayush, the trust staffs and the organization built over the years and social relationships



with the officials had been helpful. She indicated, "Some of the kebele officials are past, and may be present, beneficiaries of World Vision projects. So, they are usually cooperative."

Tilahun (World Vision) suggested, however, that the presence of the government's grassroots personnel and structures might have its own advantages:

At the *kebele* level, we have one development worker. The government has three development center workers: one agronomy, one natural resources and one animal health expert. They have two or three health extension workers at each *kebele*. Therefore, they have a better advantage of knowing and reaching the community. Whether we like it or not, working with them becomes imperative. We make sure they get our ideas right at office-level meetings with these personnel. The most important discussions are made at office, both at the *woreda* and *kebele*, levels. So we don't run to the community even if we had the freedom to do so. First, we discuss issues at the *woreda* level and reach agreement that our staffs would work together at the *kebele* level.<sup>26</sup>

According to Tilahun, the first thing they do is share whatever information they have with the *kebele* office. This might mostly mean just writing a short letter and indicating that they want to pass such and such information to the community on a certain day. Mainly, it is the *kebele* chairperson who is responsible for coordinating all government workers, community representatives and the World Vision community worker (usually for explanation). Tilahun noted, "They have one or two such meetings every week. We exploit such opportunities to pass on related messages we may have."

### **The Voices of Ethiopian Government Officials and Experts**

The community members' descriptions of development and the role of NGOs are largely shared by the government officials and the experts I interviewed. For instance, a Limmu Seqqa district official, Mr. Jibril, considers NGO's "investment" in his area as remarkable "support," which "the people have accepted." He explained, "We talk to the people regularly. For the most part, Oxfam worked on building the [coffee] union's capacity. The union has been working with its member associations and our district's office. People are happy about this." Tolosa, another local government official, supports Jibril's ideas:

Oxfam has been working in our *woreda* [the smallest local government unit] as a development ally. It has made a great deal of contributions to us. It has done a meaningful job especially in unemployment reduction and helping in furthering development initiatives of the government. For example, if we see Derra and Seqqa localities, Oxfam is providing adult literacy education for women. The women are also being trained on how to solve the challenges they have based on objective realities of their locality.<sup>27</sup>

Government officials from Adama locality described development and NGOs roles in similar ways. For example, Teshome (male, 52) described what World Vision does in the *woreda* he is in charge of as follows:

World Vision does many types of community development works. For example, the works they do in collaboration with my office include water harvesting since the area is one of the rain-deficit parts of the county. It [World Vision] encourages farmers to engage in fruits and vegetable production. In addition, they handout

water pumps to some farmers. We distribute those together. We also give training.<sup>28</sup>

Unlike community members' descriptions, we can hear in these interviews some sense of collaboration of ideas as opposed to just labor and materials. It is important to note the use of pronoun "we" in place of the commonly used "they" referring to the NGOs. Explaining his personal experience with World Vision's development work, agriculture expert, Dereje (male, 35) says, "Since I came here, I have been working with them technically owing to my expertise." He has taken part in occasional monitoring and evaluation of World Vision's projects for the local government. He had the chance to closely observe all sectors of World Vision's undertakings including "water, health, education, children and youth-related activities, agriculture." Along this line, Beyene, another government-hired expert who has acquainted with World Vision since 1998, elaborates:

World Vision is an aid organization. The first thing they do is finding connecting sponsors for children from destitute families. They do development works mostly in agriculture, health, education sectors. Especially in the agriculture sector, there was a huge problem of animal health. Lack of health service for the animals was the number one problem. Since I came here, we have built four animal health clinics in rural villages. There were three such clinics formerly constructed and equipped by World Vision. Government also constructed three clinics taking the total number of clinics to ten. Not only these, they have done a lot of works in the crop production sector. They worked in 11 *kebeles* (villages) which have been

most affected by famine. Apart from humanitarian help, they were engaged on rehabilitation works such as supply of seeds, tools and cows.<sup>29</sup>

Notwithstanding the life saving and development works World Vision does, there are a few government officials who are skeptical of the mission of this organization. For instance, Beyene is of the opinion that "World Vision claims to do development. However, there are situations where it has a religious mission behind the scene. They don't show all their policies to the society quite often except that they present their five-year plans."

A federal government official I interviewed explains how the Ethiopian government perceives NGOs and their role in development. According to Hassen, development is primarily the business of the Ethiopian people and government. However, due to the large magnitude of unattended needs, NGOs are welcome to "fill the gap" identified by the country. As he explains it, there are specific tasks foreign NGOs<sup>15</sup> could and could not do as stipulated in the Charities and Societies Legislation the Ethiopian Parliament passed in 2009:

The proclamation has set apart development and democratization. There was no law that separated the two. Development work meant only focusing on interventions during, for example, flood, natural calamities and the likes. But now, in addition to those, they can do expanding education, health coverage expansion, infrastructure expansion, etc. The legislation puts no restrictions on organizations that would like to do such activities. They can generate funding

---

<sup>15</sup> According to Article 2, sub-article 4 of the Ethiopian Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009, "foreign charities" are those charities that are formed under the laws of foreign countries or which consist of members who are foreign nationals or are controlled by foreign national or receive funds from foreign sources.

from foreign sources and function within the legal frameworks of the country. These are what we call development. They can't do democratization and human rights with the money secured from foreign sources. These are areas that need to be left aside for the society. These belong to the people. These should come from within the people. Thus, the country can take of democratization works mobilizing its own resources and in coordination with other areas of national interest. Any recipient of foreign funding always has the responsibility of reporting to the donors. In that case, they serve the interest of the donor community, not the local communities they claim to serve. They will be required to do duties assigned by the donors. Therefore, in the interest of sovereignty, the legislation requires democratization be done with local resources.<sup>30</sup>

When asked about how the new legislation might have affected the activities of NGOs, Hassen explained, "Organizations formerly mixing up activities started to make their identities clear." He also noted that many NGOs, which had interest in human rights and advocacy, "switched focus and came to development." According to Hassen, "There are some [NGOs] that decided to raise funds from within the country and pursue democratization and human development works they had started."

### **Expertise versus Indigenous Knowledge: Integration and Tensions**

A major tension I investigated in this study is the one between expertise and indigenous knowledge. Expert voices represent the views of professional, college-educated NGO workers who have been trained in various disciplines. These staffs are exposed to widely circulated development discourses. On the other hand, what I call indigenous knowledge is community understanding gained from long-lived, customary

and creative practices. It is on the basis of such local knowledge that communities make decisions on important things like agriculture, health and the like.

The community members I interviewed did not often see themselves as knowledgeable. They were usually reluctant to articulate their understanding of how their life could change for the better. They left finding innovative ideas largely to government and NGO experts. For example, Alemu (male crop farmer, 62) indicated they do not try to "advise" the NGO workers. He wondered, "What can we advise them? What for? They are educated. We ask questions and they answer. Other than that, we don't advise them. Do they accept if at all we advise them?" Several other participants shared this view (Desta; Sebokka).

Interviewed community members seemed comfortable articulating their needs and prioritizing them. For instance, Alemitu (female, 32) reported sitting in meetings where they tell World Vision staff members, "This person has challenges. He needs aid." She explained, "We identify those who need help and present this information to them [World Vision]." Similarly, Saba (female, 49) explained, "Last time they [Oxfam staffs] came with the white men and asked us what we need. We told them we would be happy if we could obtain a loan without interest." It does not mean that all needs put forth by the community were considered by NGOs. In this regard, Kedir (male, 40) reported:

The problem with World Vision is that they take whoever they want and don't take some other kids on the grounds that their age is not right [for the sponsorship program]. We select those in dire need and present this to them. They tell us "no." They don't give us sufficient reasons. They tell us "wait, wait, wait" for everything. When we ask them, "Why?" They don't explain. Even if they have

taken photos of some kids, they tell us, only a few get accepted by the people [sponsors] abroad. We accept that because we think that is true. It would have been better if they identified those households, which have no capacity to provide for their family.<sup>31</sup>

World Vision raises most of the money for community services from child sponsorship programs. Community members consider sponsorship a great opportunity. This is because some of, if not all, the organization's activities target sponsored children and their families.

I did not see instances of individual farmers presenting themselves as having knowledge they can bring to the table for the sake of discussion and negotiation. They preferred to portray themselves as people who are responsive to expert advice. Community research participants did report some signs of push back. For instance, Dinke (female, 35) indicated, "If we do not like what they suggest, we tell them it doesn't work for our area or it doesn't help us." Asked if World Vision staffs agree to change plans as per community suggestions, Dinke said, "Sometimes they do." Some participants seemed to know that, in principle, they have the right to resist NGO workers' ideas. Along these lines, Sebboka (male, 38) pointed out:

There are development ideas that come from higher bodies. The community could say, "No, this is not helpful to us. We know what works for we have lived in the area for 25, 50 or 30 years. We don't accept this." Actually, they don't bring to us things that do not work. They are educated people. They know what is beneficial to us. Even though not educated, the community also knows. They [the community members] have the right to say. "No. We don't accept."<sup>32</sup>

However, the practice, as we can see here, emphasized the "experts know everything" discourse. When I asked Sebokka if he had witnessed situations where the community rejected experts' ideas, he replied the community usually accepts because "they explain stuff so well."

The community voice is noticeably stronger when the community is more organized. Leaders of the coffee union and the women's credit association seem to have a better understanding of how to make their voice matter. For instance, Saba explained the process of how her association came to own the grain mill. "They called me for a meeting at Jimma town and asked me about the challenges of the association." She told them her association "would be much stronger if they [Oxfam] helped sponsor a project." Then, they negotiated on the type of the project. Saba reported that she demanded a "grains shop." Oxfam staff suggested, "How about a grains mill?" Saba thought "that is a good idea." The two parties finally talked about the advantages and challenges of putting up a grain mill in Saba's locality (Seqqa town).

I asked Limmu Enaria Coffee Union leader, Fikadu, if member voices were properly considered when they plan and run the partnership project with Oxfam. He replied, "We propose activities together with the corresponding budget requirement. We discuss the proposal. We either increase or leave out things. But usually, we initiate the plans." He also explained that he gets the list of activities from the annual plan, which has been discussed and endorsed by the general assembly. Fikadu believed the individual farmer's voice was represented in the general assembly, which is formed by representatives of coffee union's member associations. According to Fikadu, their interest was not far from Oxfam's for "they [Oxfam] got most of the information from us when



they did the project design." When there were differences between the two parties, they negotiated. Along these lines, Fikadu had the following to say:

They [Oxfam] want to get some activities done. As well, there are things we want.

In my view, mostly our interests get taken care of. For example, they want to work primarily on women. When we plan activities, they want us to involve women. But that is not their interest alone. It is something we support. So we do such things without feeling the pressure. Our union has its own regulations. They fit into our annual activity plans. If they require something out of our plan, we do not accept.<sup>33</sup>

Obviously, grassroots organizations are more influential than individual community members. This is so partly because their leaders are mostly drawn from the better-educated members of the community. For example, Fikadu has some college education. This coupled with the legitimacy he gets as a leader of the largest coffee growers association gave him the rhetorical power to challenge the views of NGO and government experts. At one point he suggested, "It would be better if Oxfam had assigned - staffs who really understand what we do here." This is a major departure from an "experts are all-knowing" narrative.

Fikadu thought NGO-union collaboration is the better way to get at the root causes of development challenges. He argued, "Farmers openly tell everything to us rather than the government and NGOs." NGO planning that does not include consulting with grassroots organizations such as the coffee union is "an exercise in futility" for those projects "could not be sustainable."

Usually the experts and community members come together during general public (large group) and small group meetings (e.g., representatives and/or leaders of various communities and grassroots organizations). In addition to meetings, experts get their ideas across using training they organize on various topics of interest. Usually, the better-educated and more influential members of the community attend the training sessions. For example, Ibrahim (male, 42) was selected as one of the model farmers and attended a two-day training session on producing better quality coffee. Experts from Oxfam and the government office of agriculture reportedly offered the training.

In the context of this study, government employees and NGO staff members represent the voice of the expert. As shown in my field observation reports, these two parties spoke the language of science and seemed to understand each other very well. The experts were the major sources of knowledge and hence dominated discussions in meetings with community members. When interviewing experts, I asked questions like: Who usually chairs meetings? Who speaks longer in meetings? Who explains development challenges and corresponding solutions, when they meet with community members? For example, Teshome (male, 52) is an agricultural expert with the local government office. In his current position he has worked with grassroots communities in collaboration with World Vision for seven years. Regarding his experiences of expert-community joint meetings, he had the following to say:

Sometimes when we offer training and conduct discussions on issues that require community participation such as planning, we lead the discussions. I mean those who oversee the implementation of the plans. However, every now and then, we give them [community members] responsibilities. For example, we tell them to

select target beneficiaries. They select, without our involvement and send us the list. They discuss, select and send us - the reasons why they picked those people. So the level [of participation] depends on the agenda and our desire. If it is planning, we help them. They can do beneficiary selection by themselves.<sup>34</sup>

Beyond the topic of discussion, the facilitation skills of the chairperson matters. A fellow expert, Beyene, suggested it normally takes a while before the farmers start to speak. It is customary that they want to know the person(s) they are speaking to before they open up. Beyene argued, "We need to befriend the farmers and encourage them to share their views." Beyene showed he shared the dominant perception about the community's level of understanding when he said, "Still most of them don't speak when they meet with professionals. Because issues that require knowledge might be raised. And the farmers have common knowledge, but don't know things that require knowledge." It is very interesting to note what the experts refer to as "knowledge" is modern knowledge, which can be proven through use of scientific methods. It is apparent that several years of Ethiopian discourses about education and the educated not only helped privilege modern education, but also diminished the status of indigenous knowledge. A very common expression in Ethiopia that contributed to discourses of "educated people are knowledgeable" is "*yetemare yigdelegn*." It literally translates as "let an educated person kill me." The expression implies even the worst thing as killing a person is better executed by an educated person.

Yet another expert (Dereje, 35) argued the whole idea of "extension works" revolved around "convincing farmers to adopt new technology." He noted, "I don't know of extension tools designed based on local knowledge. If the local knowledge was that

important we don't even need the extension work." The experts noted they do not impose innovations on the farmers. Rather they reportedly use various techniques of persuasion. Tariku argued, "We do demonstrations at the FTC [farmers training center] and get some model farmers to adopt them. Gradually, the community accepts." Experts commonly reported instances of community members expressing concerns about and resisting the adoption of new technologies.

The government-employed experts and the NGO workers most often shared the same perspective. However, the NGO staffs appeared to be more cognizant of the power of indigenous knowledge. They also had faith in the ability of community members to actively take part in discussions with experts. Such belief comes, according to Shemsiya (Oxfam), from the "community-centered" principle they follow. She admitted, "It is possible for the experts to dominate," when we bring together people with various kinds of individual differences, "ranging from farmers to experts." Still, she argued her organization's "inclusiveness" gives voice to the "otherwise voiceless community members, mainly women." She seemed to promote a kind of affirmative action in her argument. According to Shemsiya, Oxfam and the coffee union agree in advance on an agenda and on which one of them should chair a meeting before facing the larger crowd. She also insisted their "adult literacy program" could empower communities and help narrow the literacy gap in the long run. In the meantime, Oxfam, together with its local partner organization (ANFEE), is using the literacy program as a venue to push new innovations. In her argument, Shemsiya singled out policy issues as an aspect of the development cycle where a community's participation is minimal. According to her, most policy formulation or policy amendment cases are taken care of by a body that is

comprised of Oxfam staffs, relevant government experts, and representatives of the coffee union and primary coffee cooperatives. "The change is communicated downwards," Shemsiya noted.

Solomon and Simret agree with their colleague Shemsiya that discussions are, in principle, possible between experts and citizens. "It all depends," according to Solomon "on how passionate" the NGO worker is. "Offering to listen to communities and vowing to advocate for their cause depends on the personality of individual NGO staff." On the flip side, Solomon stated development workers that "lack personality could foil participation with the belief that they know what is good for the community." Similarly, Simret posited that development initiatives, which are not based on the input of the community, are doomed to fail. She was wary of the influence of "people with technical knowledge" and "donors." She defended her organization's policy to put limited personnel on the ground - guarding communities from the pressure experts could possibly exert.

Many of the examples and arguments of the experts, one way or another, speak to the dialectical tensions between indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge. Anteneh of World Vision explained:

The communities have knowledge. We should find out what they don't have and come to them with innovations to fill that gap. Therefore, knowing the community has to be the first step. For example, I was once traveling between two development areas of World Vision. I saw a farmer walking with some cabbages on the back of his donkey. We knew eating vegetables was not a common thing in that area. I stopped him and asked the name of his village. I went to his village the

next day and saw that people had made a small canal from a small spring to their plot. I asked what we could do for them. They told me the well gets dry sometimes. We improved the spring and capped it for them. We also told them how they could get vegetable seeds. Then this nearby small town was filled with cabbages. We went to a different place with vegetable seeds and dug for water for them. It took us a lot of effort to get them to understand what we were up to. Not only that, it is possible that one suggestion forces itself into the other when you try to integrate two areas of knowledge.<sup>35</sup>

Anteneh seems to suggest that integration works best when the indigenous initiatives and innovative ideas mature themselves and meet somewhere in the middle. I asked him what if there had been no initiatives locally. He responded, "Communities have sustained life for generations. It is not possible they lived without putting some effort into making their life better." Similarly, Abreham indicated their job should be limited to "introducing development gaps of the community to innovations out there." He argued they would "show" how communities could rise their production from 20 quintals per hectare of land to 30 or 40 quintals. The strategies they would use to achieve that, according to Abreham, would include "demonstration, capacity building and organizing experience exchange opportunities for the farmers."

Explaining how indigenous knowledge becomes critical in certain areas, Anteneh cited grassroots conflicts between ethnic groups as an example. He argued peace-building efforts would be difficult when the police and local militia forces try to handle it by themselves. He explained how it gets much easier to find the root causes and fix them when community members are involved. He noted, "They [community members] might

have a hand in it [the conflict]." Likewise, Abreham thought when elders are involved other community members would open up and be more willing to reconcile.

I could tell that there was consensus among research participants about the need for constructive expertise-local knowledge integration. While they were very good at articulating what ought to be done, NGO experts, like the government employees, rarely reflected on their practice. Exceptionally, Wondwosen seemed self-critical but still framed bad practices as things of the past:

I see it in two ways: the practices before three, four years and the ones after that. The first one was fully a top-down approach. The experts' ideas get to the community. The chance to do things contrary to the community wanted them, but the expert's way was open. The community didn't have much chance. That was not participation. Manipulation better describes it. On the other hand, there are policies and efforts to accept community knowledge and try to build on that. However, the practice is not as much as you want it to be. We have policies and we discuss this, but I think we are short of practices because old habits die hard. More work has to be done on the minds of the professionals. You see tensions (between the indigenous and experts' ways). In some places you see them pulling each other. In some places they go their ways separately. Sometimes they collide. I think how to strike that balance might require a comprehensive study. The reason for the failure of many programs might have got to do with the unresolved tension.<sup>36</sup>

Wondwosen described the tensions very well. However, I am not sure if the tensions necessarily lead to program failure. There is a good chance they may lead to

creativity. I agree getting out of customary ways and collaboratively exploring new approaches would be the way to go forward.

Tilahun (World Vision) does not see the tension between expertise and indigenous knowledge. He argued, "Scientific discoveries build upon existing local knowledge. The goal is the same. No contradictions." However, he showed where the distinction lies when he said, "There may be differences with the process" of getting at the goal.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, my goal was to learn about how Ethiopians describe the concepts and practices of community participation. I have presented the voices of community members, NGO staffs and government officials and experts. Looking at sixty-four interviewees' conceptualization of community participation, I gathered that Ethiopian development actors are conversant (of course with varied degree) with the principles of participation. Obviously, the NGO workers explained the rationale for community participation better than community members and government staffs and officials. I noticed global discourses and terminologies used to describe participation seem to be more popular than the home-grown terminologies for community collaboration. I rarely heard people talk about traditional self-help systems and terms like *debo* and *jigi*. I will argue, in the next chapter, that this is a kind of "cultural imperialism."

Whereas all participants talked about how the venture of development requires the collaboration of all parties, what I noted, from their talks and the ways they framed participation, was the inherent tensions between the experts and communities. The experts were more vocal about communities' lack of knowledge that policy discussions



require. Community members appeared to be shy and unconfident talking about whether they could contribute ideas. They often conceded lack of ability. The experts used such space to exert power and push the agenda of their organization across. Most of the experts and the community members I interviewed were not at ease describing the space available to them for policy deliberations.

In sum, the chapter presented research participants' perceptions about social change, NGO roles in rural development and whether or not communities are meaningfully participating in making decisions on rural development issues. Privileging expert voices, attempts at redefining community development and the reflections over the prevalence of free spaces for public deliberation are among the themes that stand out. Findings in this chapter and the previous two chapters have already shown some patterns.

In the last chapter, I will put the major findings from all the three data analyses chapters into conversation to reach at conclusions about the nature of “community participation” rhetoric and practices in Ethiopia.

## **CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

This chapter begins with a brief summary of the project, which includes a review of the goal of the study, the theoretical lens and research methodology employed, and my standpoints. Then, I bring the major findings from the rhetorical criticism, ethnographic field observations and interviews into conversation with one another to further illuminate the interests of the rhetors and explore whether the claims in the rhetoric of <community participation> manifest in NGOs' interactions with communities in Ethiopia. Then, I turn towards a discussion of the theoretical, practical and policy implications of the study before I finish the chapter by highlighting limitations of the project and possibilities for future research.

The chapter answers the four research questions that guided this study: 1) Around what ideographs do development agencies organize their discourses of participatory development? Why these particular ideographs? 2) How is participatory development enacted in actual community interactions with Oxfam and World Vision staff? Whose voices are heard? 3) How conducive are the discursive spaces used by/available to NGOs in Ethiopia for promoting the engagement of communities in public deliberations? 4) How closely do NGOs' international discourses of community participation resemble the communication among grassroots development stakeholders in rural Ethiopia?

### **Project Summary**

The aim of this study has been to acquire an understanding of how the global discourse of <community participation> plays out in grassroots situations in Ethiopia. In trying to achieve this goal, I carried out rhetorical analyses of the discourses surrounding the overarching ideographs of <development> and <community participation>. I

examined the discourses of the United Nations, the World Bank, Oxfam GB, World Vision International, local Ethiopian communities, and the Ethiopian government in a bid to follow the discursive chains linking organizations and communities. I also conducted field studies in Ethiopia in order to understand the local practices of public deliberation.

While scholars from different fields have studied various aspects of "community participation," I focused on furthering the rare scholarship on this subject from a communication perspective. I was interested in illuminating <community participation> as a rhetorical construct that development agencies currently employ to control communities while appearing to uphold democratic values.

My framing of the origins of the <community participation> rhetoric was very much influenced by my African, anti-colonial, advocate standpoint. My position is that the poor must be allowed to speak on issues that matter to their lives, despite the difficult situations they might be in. Growing up, I benefited from the wisdom of rural communities in Ethiopia. The wisdom may not qualify as "expertise," according to the definition of the term offered by elites, but I argue that proven experiences about life in a community are useful inputs in the discussion of how life in that community can be transformed.

I found postcolonial theory to be a perfect fit for my standpoint. It enabled me to deconstruct issues of power embedded in the discourses and practices of "community participation." The postcolonial lens allowed me to take my arguments from a specific ideograph, <community participation>, to a larger, highly significant global phenomena (neocolonialism and neo-liberalism). My analysis shows that the rhetoric of "community participation" was introduced as a form of resistance to previous colonial discourses.

However, I learned that good expressions might not always guarantee good actions. For example, the preamble to the 1884-1885 Berlin conference on "The scramble for Africa" claims that colonization was motivated "in a spirit of good and mutual accord, to regulate the *conditions most favourable to the development of trade and civilization* in certain regions of Africa" (emphasis mine). Similarly, Article 6 of the declaration argues that the purpose of colonization was to bring home "the blessings of civilization" to the natives.

In spite of the flowery language, this act led to one of the darkest moments in the history of humanity. The commitment, expressed in the language of "suppressing slavery," ended up in expanding slavery. This case provides a sufficient reason to believe the God terms may not always translate into good actions. In the case of this study, God terms like "community participation" have been used to obscure the centralized and top-down practices of the powerful agents of "development."

It was important for a project arguing for a multiplicity of voices to gather data from multiple sources. The fact that I was able to employ mixed methods to collect data from both ends of the global development partnership (Western nations and grassroots communities in Ethiopia) helped make my arguments stronger and balanced. I was able to build rich datasets, which I can always draw from to carry out further research on specific aspects of my dissertation. For example, the dataset from the Ethiopian press is so rich that it can be used for multiple future projects.

The juxtaposition of voices and also the triangulation of textual data analysis with primary field data analysis has been a complex but a very rewarding task. As a communication scholar, my main purpose has been developing an understanding of the role of communication in organizing for social change. Most communication scholars

approach studies either from rhetorical or social scientific angles. I critiqued both the discourse of “community participation” and face-to-face interactions to reach my conclusions. In what follows, I summarize conclusions from key findings in Chapters Four, Five and Six.

#### Interpretations of Major Findings

**<Community participation>: The beloved ideograph.** Participation has been endorsed enthusiastically first by global and then by local development agencies as a "formula to remedy past failures" of development. I was overwhelmed by Western-based organizational discourses of “community participation.” The Ethiopian government and community members also used it, albeit with a varied degree of frequency. A renowned Ethiopian professor, Mesfin Woldemariam, observes, “It is a phrase loved by everybody.” This enthusiasm is related to the fact that "participation" is a nebulous term, which does not impose any specific obligations on donors and governments (Feeney, 1998).

Rhetors of different ideological orientations (e.g., democrats, autocrats) seem to have found "community participation" useful. In my view, this is the case because: a) Involving people in development is a lofty moral virtue everyone can easily embrace at first, and b) the ambiguity of the phrase makes it lend itself to a range of interpretations. While those on the democratic side of the continuum frame <participation> more as an inalienable human right, which permits citizens from all walks of life to air their concerns; those on the autocratic side use it to force citizens to contribute to the cause of the rulers. The word "participation" has historically accumulated certain meanings and rhetors of various interests draw upon these meanings as deemed necessary. Easterly

(2013) is right in contending, “One of the surprises from the history of ideas is that the same ideas could appeal simultaneously to racists and antiracists, to colonialists and anticolonialists” (p. 15). That is exactly what “community participation” does. It appeals to both the “colonialists” and “anti-colonialists.”

**Cultural imperialism?** Everybody not only embraced “community participation” but it also appears to have supplanted its homegrown, Ethiopian equivalents and concepts. Ethiopian words like *debo* and *jigi* are considered obsolete and hence are being replaced by the likes of *yehibreteseb tesatfo* and *hirmanna humata*, which are direct translations of “community participation.” On a poster hanging in one *kebele* office in rural Ethiopia, “*Hirmanna Humeta*” (“community participation” in Afan Oromo) tops the list of principles the *kebele* vows to live by (see photo in appendix G). This is an example of how communities in Ethiopia are affected by Western discourses of community participation. It is ironic that discourses of “community participation,” which are supposed to counter the imposition of Western ideas on communities in the Global South provide a case study of how Western discourses unseat indigenous ideas. In this regard the famous African postcolonial theorist, Ngugi Wa Thiongo (1986), explains how imperialism succeeds in uprooting African expressions and replaces them with Western ideas and language:

The oppressed and the exploited of the earth maintain their defiance: liberty from theft. But the biggest weapon wielded and actually daily unleashed by imperialism against that collective defiance is the cultural bomb. The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities

and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removes from themselves; for instance, with other peoples' languages rather than their own. (p. 3).

The communities I researched have no or very limited access to the mainstream media. Thus, if not the media, then Western NGOs (after missionaries and colonial forces) are mostly the ones bridging the flow of discourses from the West to rural Africa. Interviewing local community members and observing NGO-community meetings, I learned that more educated members of the community like local government officials and experts used a variant of “community participation” more frequently than the ordinary farmers.

**The homogenization and routinization of "participation".** I came to learn that participation is a very broad and ambiguous term. While participation has layers/levels, the rhetoric of <community participation> explored in this study obscures the layers and sends an impression that every instance of participation is the same. For example, participating in project decision-making is not the same as not saying a word and digging ditches for six hours. Arnstein (2001) explains that "participation" has different levels ranging from "manipulation" (placing citizens in rubberstamp committees) to "citizen control" (citizens demanding community-controlled facilities like schools). We do not see the discourses I investigated making distinctions between these levels.

I found that "community participation" was invariably used to describe a range of scenes including citizens sitting in meetings, looking completely confused (partly

because of not knowing the language used in the meeting), making the required amount of financial, labor or material contributions (whether they are willing or not) and presenting requests and explaining their situations to NGO staff and government officials, when they get the chance to speak. On the other hand, NGO experts controlled the whole process from setting the agenda, to selectively inviting attendees, to using their rhetorical advantages to systematically lead communities to make decisions their organization wanted, to reporting back to the powerful agency. In most of the annual reports I read, the NGO staff reported that the community "actively participated" in making decisions and that plans were executed "with the active participation of the community." Those who write history influence the nature of that history. In the case of community participation, the experts get to decide what gets reported and how these development reports are framed. There is little guarantee that community voices get properly accounted for, even in the case of a "bottom-up" development process. The discourses I examined rarely addressed the question, "Participation in what?" They used ambiguity as a rhetorical resource for redefining participation as "labor, material or money contributions" rather than as decision-making on issues that matter.

Whether the organizations I studied frame "participation" as a means to an end or as an end in itself was not always clear. The discourses often advanced the two conflicting ideographs of <rights> and <efficiency>. There is an inherent tension between the utilitarian and participatory approaches to development. While the former assumes a predetermined path to reach solutions to development challenges, the latter (participatory) approach is the closest thing to Habermas' concept of "communicative action," which presupposes multiple realities and favors intersubjective, open



communication that leads participants to reach tentative conclusions. International organizations' discourses of "community participation" have obscured these important philosophical tensions. While the rhetoric of NGOs emphasize some variant of communicative action, their practices (more so with World Vision than Oxfam) lean toward achieving strategic goals via utilitarian approaches.

When it comes to procedures of "participatory development" that I observed, there is an apparent routinization of the steps to be followed. I am not opposed to decorum or some kinds of rules to follow during NGO-community meetings. Doing it as a matter of requirement or for the sake of being politically correct does not seem to motivate participants to be creative. Participatory development is supposed to be a push back against pre-determined steps and solutions and maintain openness and flexibility. Paradoxically, the result of the field study indicate, NGO-community meetings, especially in the case of World Vision, were standardized and resulted in endorsing ideas pre-decided by NGO staff.

**Discursive <community>.** The word "community" is an important word very commonly used in the UN, the World Bank and NGO discourses of development. It has gained currency in Ethiopia too. It is replacing words like "public" and "the people," which became popular after the 1974 revolution in Ethiopia. "Community" is becoming popular in Ethiopia partly because of the influence of international organizations' discourses of development. It evokes for audiences a positive sense of inclusiveness and harmony. However, it is often employed by development organizations to hide the heterogeneity and complexity of citizen groups and the resulting power struggles within a "community." Guijt and Shah (1999) contend, "This mythical notion of community

cohesion continues to permeate much participatory work, hiding a bias that favours the opinion and priorities of those with more power and the ability to voice themselves publicly" (p. 1). The rhetoric makes it sound like the interest of every member of a community is represented. NGO staff members, especially, liked to say, "we are doing this because the community demanded it." There is a continued use of "community" in the sense of a homogenous and unified population with which the NGO workers can engage easily. NGO staff members homogenize community because it allows them to claim that they have addressed the needs of every community member, as if all community interests are the same. Findings of the field study suggest women, the youth, the elderly and less educated citizens have not been adequately represented in meetings. Thus, I argue, "community" is rather a rhetorical construct of powerful organizations, not a specific group of citizens as such. As Guijt and Shah (1999) rightly put it, "communities never existed in the way people romanticize them today" (p. 8). Even NGO staff members stationed at headquarters or regional officers refer to citizens as "the community" not even as "communities" as if all communities are the same.

Part of the reason why NGOs are obsessed with the word "community" is that it gives them a sense of legitimacy to speak comfortably on behalf of citizens. Ideally, legitimacy is supposed to come from the democratic procedures followed to reach agreements. In the majority of the meetings I observed, organizational staff made decisions prior to the meetings. But still development agencies jump on the "community participation" bandwagon for public relations purposes.

Having established how indistinct the terms "participation" and "community" are separately, I argue that the phrase "community participation" embodies a marriage of two

notoriously ambiguous terms, making its meaning confusing and open to widely different interpretations. Both "participation" and "community" are appealing and persuasive terms (Nelson & Wright, 1995). Many audiences take the rhetoric in good faith. But I join a group of scholars who choose to critically question the status quo.

**<Community participation> as contested ground.** As we have seen in Chapter Four, the conceptualization of poverty and the ideographs used to organize the situation of the poor varied over time. <Poverty> is the ideograph that provides the reason (exigency) for NGOs to carry out development work. Ideographs like <backwardness> and <lack of civilization> make the poor responsible for their own situation. These ideographs were used by European colonial powers to justify their decisions to control Africa and exploit the poor. Colonial empires were rationalized on the ground of <civilization>. <Civilization> allowed the colonizers to advance <paternalistic>, <top-down> approaches and employ <racist> language. Later, these devil ideographs were replaced with milder ones, partly because of the resistance that resulted from anti-colonial movements and global counter-colonial, anti-racist discourses.

Since the 1950s, African nations started to gain independence. Independence allowed African elites to forge Pan-Africanism—a movement responsible for generating counter-colonial discourses. Given the strong resistance from the Global South, which was aided by the Civil Rights Movement in the USA, the Western rhetoric of poverty had to change. Poverty was reframed as "lack of technical knowledge." The response was <modernization>. The means were the sharing of <expertise>. These ideographs are often used to sustain old colonial interests of suppressing the interest of the poor. In the neoliberal era, following the Cold War period, the Western nations' and global

institutions" rhetoric of <modernization> prescribed recipes of economic development for developing countries. The West's enforcement mechanisms were humanitarian aid and economic incentives (Pieterse, 2006).

On the one hand, humanitarian NGOs of Western-origin promoted the neoliberal agenda (e.g., privileging efficiency over public good). This might be because of their interest in funding from Western governments and agencies like the UN and the World Bank. In some cases we see that the neoliberal approach of placing emphasis on market liberalization and consumerism comes in conflict with the NGOs' philanthropic goals of reducing poverty and protecting consumers. On the other hand, we see that NGOs do not subscribe to the neoliberal agenda. For example, they expressed frustrations with the neoliberal approaches during the 1999 World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Seattle. Not only were NGOs very vocal, they also played an effective grassroots organizing role by mounting intense pushback against WTO (Wells, Shuey & Kiely 2001). Love-hate might better express the relationships between many NGOs and global financial agencies and donors.

In the 1980s, critics started to question if the flow of finance and <expertise> from North to South alone was the solution for lack of development. They wanted to know why there was still rampant poverty in developing countries after decades of <expertise> diffusion. As a result of posing this question, there was a movement to reframe poverty as lack of <participation>. Unjustly denying the poor their basic right of participation in decision-making was considered a contributing cause of poverty. Since then, the rhetoric of <community participation> has flourished. However; the desire to

privilege <expertise> lingers, sitting in ideological tension with <community participation>.

**Tensions between < expertise> and <community participation>.** There is no doubt in my mind that communities need NGOs and experts to improve unacceptable current situations. I understand expertise is one element, perhaps the critical element that has transformed the world. I totally agree with Easterly's characterization of experts in explaining the purpose of his book, *The Tyranny of Experts*:

When my toilet stops working, I am grateful for the expert plumber. When I get giardia, I am grateful for the expert doctor who prescribes Flagyl. Experts in sanitation, health, and education offer huge benefits for the world's poor.

Medicines and antimalaria nets certainly save lives. This book is not about condemning all expertise, it is about distinguishing between good and bad ambitions for expertise in development. (p. 16)

Likewise, "community participation" is a noble concept. It is very important for countries like Ethiopia where democratic culture is underdeveloped. Community participation could serve as a training ground for democratically generating ideas that might help solve problems the society is facing. Communities in Ethiopia have put huge faith in NGOs, which have Western origins and international experiences. NGOs have tried to instill some democratic values. This could be the main reason why the Ethiopian government has been skeptical of human rights NGOs since the 2005 elections. So how do <expertise> and <community participation> stand in tension with one another?

My argument, in this study, is that the discourses that underpin <expertise> have been unfairly used to undermine communities' rights to participate fully in the process of

development. Dietz (1995) argues that the democratic tradition is under pressure in the contemporary world. “One source of the pressure,” Dietz contends, “is the power of science and technology to transform the world” (p. xviii). In the discourses of NGOs and multilateral organizations I examined, <expertise> silenced ordinary citizens for lack of modern education or “expertise.” Here is where problems arise. I was concerned to see systematic privileging of higher level of modern education. For example, when NGO staff members bring project plan matrixes written in English to meetings where predominantly uneducated people attend, there is no level ground for participation. I have seen this happen as I reported in Chapter Five. These participatory practices are self-defeating.

Like earlier colonial discourses that portrayed Africans as uncivilized, the portrayal of ordinary Africans as uneducated and uninformed justify expert decision-making. The experts always talked about how capable the communities were of taking part in discussions with them. NGO staff members are not opposed to community participation. In fact, they provide several reasons why communities should be part of the decision-making. Yet, the actions I saw in the field spoke to me about the practices of the NGO workers far louder than their words.

**Despite good intentions: <Community participation> rhetoric versus practice.** Oxfam and World Vision have been doing well. Communities greatly appreciate their contributions. They have good intentions and put a lot of effort into development. Some NGO staff members have to live in hostile environments (e.g., malaria, ethnic clashes) and in localities where there is no running water, electricity or Internet service. Despite their efforts, there are often gaps between NGOs' insistence on

the importance of participation and their practice of participation on the ground. The interviews and ethnographic observations suggest that the deliberative practices on the ground are far from matching the rhetoric of “community participation.”

As pointed out in several other studies, many NGO projects were found to be non-participatory or to manifest a weak degree of participation (Chambers, 1997, Feeney, 1998; Serveas, 1996). I argue, at least in the case of the NGOs I studied, that the word “participation” is usually used as a “cosmetic label,” while the more important preoccupation for these organizations is cost-reduction and public relations. Whereas “empowerment” is emphasized as the aim of “community participation,” I often did not find this to be the case in practice. Of course, there were some hopeful examples like the case of Lelistu Women’s Self Help Association. The spirited conversations among members of the association, which were uncharacteristic of Muslim women in the study area, were indicative of how empowering participation could be.

The ultimate goal of “community participation” should be emancipating the poor. “Community participation” is supposed to imply the end of marginalization and herald the inclusion of new voices at the table of development discussions. It has to bring about change in unfair social systems and power relationships. In the previous chapters, we have seen how power sits right in the middle of the tensions surrounding the discourses of “community participation.” The central tension between <expertise> and <participation> calls for the redistribution of power held by experts. In a situation where the powerful remain powerful, claims of “community participation” do not hold water. To explain the case of “participation” without power redistribution, Arnstein (2011) cites a poster painted by frustrated French students. The poster translated into English reads, “I

participate, you participate, he participates, we participate...they profit" (p. 3). It exemplifies a situation where communities "participate," experts make decisions, and the interests of organizations are served.

From what I observed in the field, the NGO workers had a tremendous rhetorical advantage because they set the rules of the meetings and the language of conversations. Except in the case of the women's credit association, I did not see negotiations taking place over the rules of the game. In addition to their expertise, the wealthy organizations they represent, the amount of current information they have, their access to technology, and the influential networks they have made the NGO staff members looked very powerful. Their nonverbal cues conveyed their power. I argue that NGOs are still the locus of power, with slight variation among them. World Vision looked like a more powerful organization than Oxfam. The Oxfam development facilitator was, in most cases, willing to let go of her power. On the other end, marginalized community members looked helpless because of these choices (of language, procedures of the meeting, lack information, etc.) the experts made prior to the start of the meetings.

**Multiple accountability and limited space for deliberation:** NGOs are accountable to multiple partners: donors, international headquarters, the host government, the community they serve and other stakeholders. Each party has interests, which may stand in tension with the interests of others. For example, international donors' desire of instilling democratic culture comes in tension with the host government's desire to control grassroots activities (e.g., the one-to-five surveillance/mobilization mechanism). Wills (2005) argues, "Managing these tensions is a difficult endeavor and one in which the long-term participatory strategy of projects is likely to suffer" (p. 113). According to



Wills, “many projects are more likely to react to the requirements and preferred activities of the potential donors than local people” (p. 113).

NGO headquarters demand that staff invest in projects with “tangible” results while at the same time meeting reporting timelines. Headquarters and donors send community-based field offices all kinds of manuals and procedures to follow, including community participation manuals. NGO staff members on the ground have a feeling that deliberative space in Ethiopia is increasingly constrained by government regulations (e.g., the civil society code enacted in January 2009) and activities of government officials and militia at the grassroots levels.

The common denominator of interest for all the parties listed above seems to be “development.” But still there are differences when it comes to the question of how to prioritize and how development should be approached. This study joins a group of studies insisting that donors must understand the local tensions and revisit their modes of partnership with implementing NGOs if they are serious about democracy and long-term goals of development. One of the constraints for “community participation” that NGO staff members frequently reported was the pressure from donors for “timely reports” and “showing results/impacts.”

The way forward: Highlighting practices and making policy recommendations

This study may appear to be dominated by cynical complaints about the failure of “community participation.” In this section, I balance my criticisms of past participation practices by highlighting windows of hope. Based on the discussions thus far and the findings of the study, I highlight best practices surrounding “community participation” and make some policy recommendations. I see hope for community participation in

dialogic approaches to communication. Thus, my recommendations for better deliberative practices are largely informed by Jürgen Habermas's theory of the ideal speech situation and the dialogic communication theory Stanley Deetz developed drawing on Gadamer (1975). Deetz and Simpson (2004) argue that Habermas' and Gadamer's views of dialogue complement each other to provide "more productive guidance to reforming human interaction and enhancing mutual, free, and open decision making" (p. 142). In addition to the theoretical basis, I integrate ideas from my readings and experience into my recommendations. I categorize the development actors mainly into two clusters: 1) the global actors (the UN, the World Bank, other donors and NGOs' international headquarters) and 2) grassroots actors (NGO field offices, NGO staff, communities and the host government). I am careful not to fall in the devil "top-down" trap by suggesting a one-size-fits-all method of public deliberations. Research needs to be done to come up with ideas of what works best for a given community and the context of its relationships with NGOs. I believe, at this point, I am sufficiently informed to make suggestions for the specific organizations and communities I studied.

**Suggestions for the United Nations, the World Bank and other donors.** From the juxtaposition of the narrower and wider circumferences of the pentadic analysis, I learned that donor expectations of NGOs help expand liberal democracy, on the one hand, and urge the implementation of the neo-liberal economic ideal of maintaining efficiency, on the other hand. This tension influenced the ways the participatory drama played out at the community level in Ethiopia. Based on my findings, I suggest that international donors and influential multilateral organizations should not rush project implementing NGOs to instill Western templates of participation in an entirely different

cultural context. By its very nature, community participation is a lengthy process that requires patience. If we have to stay away from coercions, then communities need time to digest ideas, consult with their elders and opinion leaders before they say “yes.” Unlike individualistic values of speed, competition, and efficiency, calmness is a virtue in collectivistic societies. There are two popular Ethiopian proverbs that support my point here: 1) *sirotu yetatekut sirotu yifettal* (clothes put on while running come off easily) and 2) *yerega wotet kibe yewetawal* (still milk gives more crème). It takes rural community members in Ethiopia a long time before they open up their mouths to say the first word. They want to make sure they trust the other parties before telling them their true feelings. Thus, donors need to understand the particularity of vernacular public spheres and encourage NGOs to come up with a model for negotiating ideas, which is closer to the traditions of a given community. A good example could be the “community conversation” method researched and implemented in Ethiopia by UNDP. It is a model where a trained facilitator (community member) and other interested community members, of all types, sit together in a circle (usually on the ground) and talk about problems in their neighborhood and how they could fix them. This method was acclaimed for being effective in creating HIV/AIDS awareness.

The United Nations, the World Bank and other donors need to decide which one of their two competing interests (promotion of democracy or efficiency) is more important to them. They have to be sure of their commitment to participatory democracy. It is only then that their support of NGOs will be productive. Emphasizing “efficiency” over “participation” leaves NGOs in a difficult position.

Robert Chambers (2012) makes a very important reference to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, which was a 2005 agreement between donor nations and organizations (including the UN and the World Bank). He went through the declaration, identified words which were used most often and made up a sentence: "To monitor indicators effective performance from aid, donors and partners need the capacity to manage the mutual harmonization of programs to assess, measure and report on results" (ANU Channel, 2012, 40:17). Such neo-liberal focus on efficiency, argues Chambers, is "a shift from a paradigm of people to a paradigm of things." On the other hand, Chambers made up another sentence out of the words, which "do not appear anywhere" in the Paris Declaration: "To negotiate and evolve agreements that optimize outcomes for poor, vulnerable and marginalized people requires compromises and tradeoffs based on personal conviction, interactions and relationships that nurture trust and reflective appreciation of power and conflicts" (ANU Channel, 2012, 40:56). By so doing, Chambers asked conference participants, which hemisphere was dominant. If a similar kind of analysis is done to the United Nations' and the World Bank's discourses of "participatory development," we might see if words of "things" (efficiency) might outnumber words of "people" (participation). For example, indicators of measurable results dominate the grand Millennium Development Goals facilitated by the United Nations. We do not see what Tirush calls the "software" or "people" aspect of development like "participation" considered as measures of success in development.

**Suggestions for the implementing NGOs.** Oxfam and World Vision field offices are accountable to multiple stakeholders. Their organizational boundaries appear to be permeable and it is difficult to draw the dividing line between the organizations and

society. In dramatic analysis in Chapter Five, we observed community members stopping the Oxfam field worker anywhere they met her and talked to her about community development issues. Blurring of boundaries is the nature of modern day organizations (Deetz, 1995; Mumby & Stohl, 1996). This is more observable with Oxfam than with World Vision, which appears to struggle to maintain its organizational identity.

Dealing with multiple stakeholders mostly poses the challenge of addressing multiple interests. Organizations usually fail to properly coordinate the representation of conflicting interests (Deetz, 1995). Along these lines, Deetz (1995) argues that “so-called empowerment, participation, and diversity programs fail to assure even employee representation if they are simply more humane and subtle continuations of managerial control systems” (p. 49). I offer “A multiple stakeholder model of representation” theorized by Deetz (1995). Originally this model was intended for for-profit corporations. However, it can be adapted to non-profit organizations and public agencies. The model enables organizations to discover situations in which “a diverse set of stakeholders find that each of their independent interest are served by developing business relationships” (p. 44). According to Deetz, instead of predetermined goal accomplishment, the model aims at achieving “collaborative decision-making contexts, creativity and mutual satisfaction” (p. 49). The payoffs, according to Deetz, include “greater representation,” “better corporate goal accomplishment,” and “learning to participate in collaborative decision-making.” The role of the NGOs will become “coordination of the conflicting interests of stakeholders rather than the controlling of them.” They will focus on “seeking the most creative codetermination for the benefit of all stakeholders” (p. 49).

If properly implemented, the multiple stakeholder model helps NGOs embrace the multiplicity of voices and interests and be able to coordinate and negotiate with stakeholders. This is a much better approach for the NGOs' long-term success. Drawing from available evidence, Deetz (1995) argues that different stakeholders would represent different and more-long term interests than management does. Responding favorably to the interests of the more powerful stakeholders at the expense of the less powerful one's benefits neither community development nor representation and participation. This kind of approach does not show that organizations are playing their stewardship role. "We are stewards" is one of World Vision's values. Stewardship has a wider meaning than spending resources properly. It is also about ensuring all voices are represented.

NGOs could employ the multiple stakeholder model of representation at the wider (national, international) or narrower (grassroots level) circumferences. In what follows, I want to focus on the community-level meetings and point out how the conception of the multiple stakeholder model, dialogic communication and the ideal speech situation might help NGO workers on the ground to better coordinate multiple interests and facilitate creative codetermination of solutions for specific development challenges. In Chapter Five, I presented the four conditions Habermas described as most important for ideal discourses: 1) No one capable of making a contribution is excluded, 2) participants have equal voice and equal chances to make arguments, 3) participants are honest with each other and with themselves, and 4) there is no coercion built into the process.

Similarly, in his theorization of a dialogic communication perspective, Deetz (1995) provided a collaborative approach to the meaning-making process where "the concern with decision practice focuses on who participated in the constitutive practice

and whether negotiative codetermination took place" (p.107). In the dialogic approach, interaction is believed to be "constitutive, codeterminative process giving rise to a truth beyond that previously understood by any participant" (p.109). In light of these theoretical bases, the Oxfam-community members meetings were relatively participatory. For the most part, community members were vocal. Even then, it is difficult to suggest the meeting met all the four requirements of the ideal speech situation standards outlined by Habermas. All the committee members attended the meeting. The meeting was inclusive of voices since these committee members were elected by the general association membership. There were no signs of excluding voices. In principle, they had equal voice and equal chances to make arguments. However, the Oxfam worker preferred to lay back and watch rather than engage them in dialogic process of collective meaning creation.

The World Vision community meetings exemplified what Deetz referred to as "the informational view." This approach "specifies personal expression as the potential practice, and control through influence as a decision practice" (p. 101). The aim of group communicative events is gaining public consent while still controlling the outcomes. Development "facilitators" sharing pre-determined plans dominated the World Vision community meetings that I observed. The procedures seemed to be in the interest of organizational rhetoric and Western stakeholders. I did not witness a shift in power from the organization to the community. The dialogic communication model and aspects of the ideal speech situation should help the NGO workers to bracket power differentials and facilitate participatory meaning negotiations and co-creation of new ones.

I observed that both Oxfam and World Vision field workers were committed to bringing about change. They are Ethiopian citizens who neither see "community participation" as a neoliberal project nor subscribe to it. In spite of expertise in certain aspects of development and their good intentions, they lacked the skills necessary to facilitate collaborative and productive discussions. Therefore, these NGOs need to offer their field development staffs training centered in negotiating interests of multiple stakeholders and facilitating dialogic communication.

NGOs should have confidence in formal and informal grassroots community organizations. If they are serious about promoting bottom-up approaches to development, they should recognize and work with traditional community associations. Since they have traditionally been platforms for open, genuine conversations not very much affected by power structures, the information that comes from these sites should be very beneficial to NGOs. For instance, the leader of the *geda* system for the *woreda* was not invited to meetings organized by World Vision. Part of the reason, in my view, is because World Vision and its workers are critical of some *geda* rituals, which deviate from the organization's version of Christianity. Organizations should be open to negotiating not only development but also culture. In this regard, the high trust Oxfam puts on grassroots community organizations was exemplary.

**Suggestions for the communities.** Results of both the interviews and pentadic analysis suggested that communities are generally the most powerless of all the stakeholders. Lack of resources, education, and deliberative free space made them appear to be the muted group. This lack of power was demonstrated, by their silence, gestures and the seats they took (near the door and far from the center of attention) especially in



the meetings with World Vision workers. Participatory approaches were supposed to empower them and change/minimize such unproductive features. Communities have things to do to change their standing even before engaging with NGOs, the government or other actors of development. One important thing they can do is discuss their own situations within existing traditional social networks and be clear about what change they desire. A development scholar and former NGO worker, Tirunesh Teklehaimanot (personal communication, November 1, 2012), underscored the need for communities to have their own vision. She argued that it is pointless to plan development interventions and expect the community members to participate meaningfully in those projects unless they know what they really want to achieve as a community.

The second important thing community members should do is organize themselves around issues of interest to them. When communities organize themselves and develop public deliberation skills, they do much better in discussions with experts. The coffee cooperatives and the credit association in Limmu Seqqa is a good example of how grassroots organizing enhances a community's negotiating power. Findings showed there are limited free spaces for grassroots organizing. Nevertheless, communities can use existing grassroots units like the *Idir* (funeral association), *Equb* (traditional financial institution), *mahber* (social/spiritual association) and neighborhood coffee parties in creative ways to work around these limiting factors and digest ideas among themselves. There are networked and vernacular spheres that are not controlled by the state or other powerful parties. Communities can use these as venues for discussing development issues, in addition to the social aspects. Communities should also nominate people to represent them in meetings with other parties.

**Suggestions for the host government.** Habermas' "ideal speech situation"

requires that there would be no interference of powerful institutions such as the state. During discussions over development, citizens should be free to go in whatever direction open dialogue takes them. However, most of the scenes of the NGO-community were not free, as discussed in the pentadic analysis. Most of the meetings were held in a *kebele* office with, in some instances, militiamen in attendance holding AK-47 machine guns. At the national level, the government not only registers and issues licenses to NGOs but also monitors their activities. In a situation like this, it is very difficult for a government that fears the communities to facilitate dialogue. Thus, the Ethiopian government has to allow NGOs and communities free spaces for discussions geared towards bringing about economic development. After all, achieving economic development is the prime goal of the government as discussed in Chapter Four. Development comes by community participation, and participation comes through free space for public deliberations. The Ethiopian government should make such freedoms of expression and association, which are enshrined in the constitution, a reality at the national and local levels.

The Ethiopian government also needs to revisit the college curricula of development workers education. The country has adopted a 70:30 enrolment ratio in favor of science and technology courses. Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn told Walta Information Centre in 2013, "Look at our education system. Our higher education enrolment is 70% in engineering and science, and 30% in social science. So 70% are going for industrialisation. Similarly, nearly all those who can't get into higher education go to technical and vocational training." It is up to the country to choose a policy and recipe. But I am among the citizens concerned about the fate of arts, humanities and

social sciences. The policy has resulted in the closure of some departments (e.g., philosophy) and the shrinking of others (e.g., languages) in Addis Ababa University. The policy is indicative of the government's perception of development more as "things" rather than "people." The privileged science and engineering disciplines do not often include courses that help graduates prepare to engage grassroots communities in development conversations.

During my field study in Ethiopia, I was sitting in a restaurant with a bright young medical student. In the middle of our conversation, I asked him whether they take any course related to communication. His answer was a resounding "No." I probed further and wanted to know if he thinks medical care providers need to have improved communication skills to better understand and help patients. He did not seem to appreciate the idea. I kept thinking that I have to use every opportunity to urge curriculum developers to include communication courses in fields of study like medicine. Unless they realize the human and communicative aspects of dealing with communities, young college graduates are likely to resort to what they know best—the technocratic or expertise approach. It is the responsibility of the government of Ethiopia and NGOs to make sure field-level development practitioners get balanced training before they engage with communities and also while on the job. Including participation as an important chapter in civics textbooks for Ethiopian high schools is a step in the right direction. This needs to have continuity in colleges.

#### Contributions of the Study

This study contributes to further theorizing on grassroots democracy. It contributes to the literature on the influence of global rhetoric on grassroots deliberations

about social change. The study of "live," grassroots level rhetoric is an emerging area in the field of rhetoric. This study provides a case for employing rhetorical criticism to provide accounts of nuanced, everyday experiences of communities in the course of analyzing global discourses. In a predominantly oral society, creating texts that permit the marginalized communities to speak to a wider audience is another contribution of this project. The marriage of the rhetorical and ethnographic traditions provides a useful resource for researchers who want to further develop the tradition of jumping over methodological fences. Coming from the rhetorical and ethnographic traditions of research, this study furthers the "ideal speech situation," "genuine speech" and "dialogic" communication theories advanced by Habermas, Gadamer and Deetz respectively. Unlike many other studies, this study centers participation in communication studies. The current project responds to the call for furthering communication-based postcolonial studies (Shome, 1996; Shome & Hedge, 2001).

I argued in Chapter One that I am uniquely well suited to carry out this project. My African, anti-colonial, pro-poor, social change-oriented communication scholar identities have informed my worldview. Thus, even if other scholars have studied "community participation," this study adds a variant of "truth" as "truth" is dependent on standpoint.

This research has practical implications for NGOs and other grassroots development agents. The research helped me reflect on five years of involvement in NGO work. I hope my colleagues and fellow NGO workers get a chance to reflect critically on their service. I had no idea holding meetings with communities in rural neighborhoods had a far-reaching connection with democracy and colonization. In my time with NGOs,

I would imagine that the goal of holding meetings with "the community" was living up to organizational rules and donor expectations. In our reports, we wanted to show donors that we were speaking their language. If I go back to work for them, I will be an expert who advocates for "community participation" of a different type. I will help colleagues see how grassroots communicative decision-making is connected to global discourses. I will promote "community participation" as an "empowering" process and as a mechanism for achieving "holistic" and truly "sustainable" development. If the study could help me take the log out of my own eyes and clearly see, then I believe it will help NGOs in Ethiopia become cognizant of the gaps between the rhetoric and practices of "community participation" and perhaps adopt multiple stakeholder model of representation and dialogic approaches to communication.

This study has limited itself to the communication-based, rhetorical and deliberative aspects of participation. However, it can be used as a springboard for researchers who want to further theorize what variant of democracy suits nations like Ethiopia. I have heard/read from scholars and public officials in Ethiopia who argue that homegrown types of democracy (like "revolutionary democracy" currently pursued by the ruling party) work better for the nation than liberal democracy. For citizens of Ethiopia who have long-standing collectivist traditions, a constitutive, participatory democracy built on the indigenous traditions like the *Geda system* might be a good alternative to revolutionary democracy or the self-expression-based, elitist, competitive liberal democracy.

Limitations of the Study

Obviously, the study has its own limitations. First, given the large amount of textual and field data I gathered, I am a little shy to say I have done justice to the datasets. Some people I interviewed (like Ethiopian scholars) are out for strategic reasons of focus. However, I will use those datasets for future researches. Second, each of the research components (textual analysis and qualitative analysis of field data) has the potential for further expansion. I had to limit myself in the interest of time and the triangulation strategy I chose to pursue. Third, since one of the promises of the <community participation> is a "bottom-up" flow of ideas, it would have been useful to study some ideographs that were born in local communities and made the reverse journey to the global sphere of development discourses. Fourth, I looked at discourses in the last six decades, with most of my focus on the last three. However, since the roots of "community participation" is located in discourses of colonialism and even pre-colonial periods, a fully developed diachronic analysis should start at least from the time of the Berlin conference held in 1884. Fifth, I put little emphasis on the interest and ideology of the current Ethiopian regime because my focus was mainly on the connections of global discourses to community practices and how NGOs mediated the communication process. Sixth, it was not always easy to translate quotations from two vernacular languages into English. It is possible that some expressions are slightly altered to make them understandable to the audiences of this manuscript.

## Conclusion

The theoretical giant of rhetoric, Kenneth Burke (1966), defines human beings as "symbol-using, symbol-making, and symbol-misusing animals" (p.16). This describes what human beings have done to the symbol "community participation"—made, used and

misused. Because of the cultural capital the phrase accumulated over time, people with different motives have used it to mean different things and further different ends.

From the findings of textual and field data, I conclude that all stakeholder of development agree, at least theoretically, that communities should be part of the decision-making process on issues that matter to them. <Community participation> has become a household phrase for development agents. It is starting to take root among the communities themselves, unseating local variants. What progress has it made so far? Very little. For the most part, the rhetoric of <community participation> has missed the boat. There is a reinterpretation of discourses at the local level. While international level discourses seem to emphasize the aspect of participation as it is contained in the essence of communicative action, local discourses and practices support the strategic, cost-effectiveness aspects. The indigenous aspects of participation do not seem to have affected the discourses and practices of NGOs. Because of power imbalance and lack of good representation, local knowledge fails to factor into the reinterpretation of discourses.

Even if organizational discourses foreground participation as a democratic right, "most of the participatory approaches used in development at the moment are 'participation as a means'" (Nelson & Wright, 1995, p. 17). Primarily, the rhetoric of participation is employed to mask continued centralization in the name of decentralization. The dramas in the field are performed to meet donors' conflicting interests of furthering liberal democracy and achieving neo-liberal gains in efficiency.

Together with aid money and interests in <democratization>, the ideograph <community participation> warrants Western-based NGOs second chance to operate in

Africa. There has been a lot of pushback against colonial and neo-colonial approaches from the global South. In some countries NGOs are considered Western spies and “agents of dependency syndrome” (e.g., Eritrea). Thus, against this rhetorical situation, development agents found it necessary to come up with concepts/phrases that help show skeptical partners in the South, they have good intentions. One of these ideographs happens to be <community participation>. Rhetors of all sorts, including governments of non-democratic states, embrace “community participation.” This might be because they realized reciting the rhetoric and allowing some drama (procedures), would not result in fundamental changes with existing power relations. It does not cost anyone if community members sit in meetings without affecting decisions.

According to Pieterse (2006), development policies during neoliberal globalization are a paradox. “NGOs are professionalized and depoliticized,” while their aim is “building democracy by strengthening civil society” (p. 101). International development agencies use the rhetorical technique of exploiting the contested ground of meaning and continue to employ these words.

Colonialists sought to postpone the rights of Africans on the grounds of solving technical problems first. After colonialism, <expertise> is used to sustain top-down approaches to development. Expertise offered justification for denying poor people a real chance of discussing their own situations. The experts prefer to frame poverty as a shortage of technical knowledge. For others, “poverty is a shortage of rights” (Easterly, 2013). Easterly argues, “The people in Africa have suffered through seven decades of autocracy that started with a form of autocracy called colonialism and continued later with technocratic justification for later autocrats” (p. 81). One of the finding of the



research is that there is gap between the claims the rhetoric of “community participation” makes and actual practices of grassroots deliberations. Are there ways to minimize/close the gap? Yes.

I want to end with a positive note that donors, NGO staff members, communities and the government of Ethiopia all have one thing in common—the goal of positive change in the lives of the poor. They are all stakeholders of development. There might be differences in ideology and choice of approaches to development. However, the desire of “development” is a common denominator, which should be used as a space to start to engage in real dialogue. Yes, there is little free space for NGOs to engage communities on issues like human rights (as stipulated in the Ethiopian law). Starting with economic development and using creativity to go from there is the way out. The self-control demonstrated by members of Lelistu Self-Help association can be regarded as a beacon of hope and model for grassroots organizing and community participation.

## References

- Agunga, R. A. (1997). *Developing the third world: A communication approach*. Commack, NY: Nova Science.
- Ahmad, M. M. (2006). The NGO debate in development. In M.C. Behera (Ed.), *Globalising rural development: Competing paradigms and emerging realities*. New Delhi, India: Sage.
- Ahmed, S., & Potter, D. (2006). *NGOs in international politics*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press.
- Allen, B. J. (1996). Feminism and organizational communication: A black woman's (re)view of organizational socialization, *Communication Studies*, 47, 257-271.
- Amutabi, M. N. (2006). *The NGO factor in Africa: The case of arrested development in Kenya*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Anderson, M. B., Brown, D., & Jean, I. (2012). *Time to listen: Hearing people on the receiving end of international aid*. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects.
- Angeles, L. C. (2005). Participatory development. In T. Forsyth (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of international development* (pp. 506-511). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Arnstein, S. R. (2011). A ladder of citizen participation. In A. Cornwall (Ed.), *The participation reader* (pp. 3-18). London, UK: Zed.
- Asante, M. (2004). Participatory communication for development and the African philosophy debate. In C. O. Festus & E. Festus (Eds.), *Development and communication in Africa* (pp. 3-14). New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Australian National University [ANUchannel]. (2012, December 18). *The challenges for participatory development in contemporary development practice - Part 1* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sh3Ugs-CvaQ>
- Baaz, M. E. (2005). *The paternalism of partnership: A postcolonial reading of identity in development aid*. New York, NY: Zed.
- Babbie, E. (1990). *Survey research methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Ballard, R. (2008). Between the community hall and the city hall: Five research questions on participation. *Transformation: Critical perspectives on Southern Africa*, 66(6), 168-188.
- Bamberger, M. (1988). *The role of community participation in development planning and project management*. Washington DC: The World Bank.

- Bariagaber, A. (2006). Ethiopia. In T. M. Leonard (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of the developing world* (pp. 584-586). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Baxter, P.T.W. (1996). Introduction. In P.T.W Baxter, A. Hultin, & A. Triulzi (Eds.), *Being and becoming Oromo: Historical and anthropological enquires* (pp. 9-25). Asmara, Eritrea: Red Sea Press.
- Behera, M. C. (2006). Introduction. In M. C. Behera (Ed.), *Globalizing rural development: Competing paradigms and emerging realities* (pp. 5-19). New Delhi, India: Sage.
- Bernstein, H. (2000). Colonialism, capitalism, development. In T. Allen & A. Thomas (Eds.), *Poverty and development into the 21st century* (pp. 241-271). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Bessette, G. (2004). *Involving the community: A guide to participatory development communication*. Ottawa, Canada: Southbound.
- Birdsell, D. S. (1987). Ronald Reagan on Lebanon and Grenada: Flexibility and interpretation in the application of Kenneth Burke's pentad. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 73, 267-279.
- Black, E. (1965/1978). *Rhetorical criticism: A study in method*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Blake, C. (2010). *The African origins of rhetoric*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Boyd, J., & Waymer, D. (2011). Organizational rhetoric: A subject of interest(s). *Management Communication Quarterly*, 25, 474-493.
- Braithwaite, C. A. (1997). Sa'ah Naaghai Bik'eh Hozhoon: An ethnography of Navajo educational communication practices. *Communication Education*, 46(4), 219-233
- Broadfoot, K. J., & Munshi, D. (2007). Diverse voices and alternative rationalities: Imaging forms of postcolonial organizational communication. *Management Quarterly*, 21(2), 249-267. doi:10.1177/0893318907306037
- Brummett, B. (2008). *A rhetoric of style*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Burghardt, C. R. (2005). Purposes of rhetorical criticism. In C. R. Burghardt (Ed.), *Readings in rhetorical criticism* (pp. ?). State College, PA: Strata.
- Burke, K. (1966). *Language as symbolic action: Essays on life, literature and method*. Berkley & Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

- Burke, K. (1969). *A grammar of motives*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press.
- Carter Center. (2009). *Observing the 2005 Ethiopian national elections: Carter Center final report*. Retrieved from [http://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace\\_publications/election\\_reports/Ethiopia-2005-Finalrpt.pdf](http://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace_publications/election_reports/Ethiopia-2005-Finalrpt.pdf)
- Chambers, R. (1989). *The state and rural development: Ideologies and an agenda for the 1990s, IDS Discussion Paper, 169*. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies.
- Chambers, R. (1994). The origins and practice of participatory rural appraisal. *World Development*, 22, 953-969.
- Chambers, R. (1997). *Whose reality counts? Putting the first last*. London, UK: Intermediate Technology.
- Chambers, R. (1997). *Whose reality counts? Putting the first last*. London, UK: Intermediate Technology.
- Chambers, R. (1999). Foreword. In S.A. White (Ed.), *The art of facilitating participation: Releasing the power of grassroots communication* (pp. 8-10). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Chambers, R. (2005). *Ideas for development*. Sterling, VA: Earthscan.
- Chan, S. (2002). *Liberalism, democracy and development*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Chandler, D. (2011). Rethinking global discourses of security. In T. Chandler & N. Hynek (Eds.), *Critical perspectives in human security: Rethinking emancipation and power in international relations* (pp. 114-128). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Cheney, G. (2000). Interpreting interpretive research: Toward perspectivism without relativism. In S. R. Corman & M. S. Poole (Eds.), *Perspectives on organizational communication* (pp. 17-45). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Cheney, G., & McMillan, J.J. (1990). Organizational rhetoric and the practice of criticism. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 18, 93-114.
- Cheney, G., Christensen, L. T., Zorn, T. E., & Ganesh, S. (2004). *Organizational communication in the age of globalization*. Protect Heights, IL: Waveland.
- Cleaver, F. (2001). Institutions, agency and the limitations of participatory approaches to development. In B. Cook & U. Kothari (Eds.), *Participation: The new tyranny?* (pp. 36-55). New York, NY: Zed.

- Cloud, D. L. (1998). The rhetoric of <family values>: Scapegoating, utopia, and the privatization of social responsibility. *Western Journal of Communication*, 62, 387–419.
- Condit, C. M., & Bates, B. R. (2009). Rhetorical methods of applied communication scholarship. In L. R. Frey & K. N. Cissna (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of communication research* (pp. 106-128). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Condit, C. M., & Lucaites, J. (1993). *Crafting equality: America's Anglo-African word*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Conquergood, D. (1992). Ethnography, rhetoric and performance. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 78, 80-123.
- Conrad, C. (2011). *Organizational rhetoric: Strategies of resistance and dominance*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Cook, B., & Kothari, U. (2001). The case for participation as tyranny. In B. Cook & U. Kothari (Eds.), *Participation: The new tyranny?* (pp. 1-15). New York, NY: Zed.
- Cornwall, A., & Brock, K. (2005). Beyond buzzwords “poverty reduction,” “participation” and “empowerment” in development policy. Program paper 10, United Nations Research Institute for Social Change.
- Crable, R. E. (1990). “Organizational rhetoric” as the fourth great system: Theoretical, critical and pragmatic implications. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 18, 115-128.
- Creswell, J. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oak, CA: Sage.
- Cutler, P. (1991). The political economy of famine in Ethiopia and Sudan. *Environmental Security*, 20(5), 176-178.
- Deetz, S. (2001). Conceptual foundations. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication* (pp. 3-46). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Deetz, S., & Simpson, J. (2004). Critical organizational dialogue. In R. Anderson, L. A. Baxter & K. N. Cissna (Eds.), *Dialogue: Theorizing difference in communication studies* (pp. 141-158). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Deetz, S. (1995). *Transforming communication, transforming business: Building responsive and responsible workplaces*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Dempsey, S. E. (2009). NGOs, communicative labor, and the work of grassroots representation. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 6, 328-345.
- Dietz, T. (1995). Democracy and science. In O. Renn, T. Webler, & P.M. Wiedemann (Eds.), *Fairness and competence in citizen participation: Technology, risk, and society* (pp. xvii-xix). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic.
- Dierks, R. G. (2001). *Introduction to globalization: Political and economic perspectives for the new century*. Chicago, IL: Burnham.
- Eade, D. (2010). Preface. In T. Forsyth (Ed.), *Deconstructing development discourse: Buzzwords and fuzzwords* (pp. vii-x). Warwickshire, UK: Practical Action.
- Easterly, W. (2013). *The tyranny of the experts: Economists, dictators and the forgotten rights of the poor*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Ellingson, L.L. (2009). *Engaging crystallization in qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Eriksen, E. O., & Weigard, J. (2003). *Understanding Habermas: Communicating action and deliberative democracy*. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Ewalt, J. (2011). A colonialist celebration of national <heritage>: Verbal, visual, and landscape ideographs at Homestead National Monument of America. *Western Journal of Communication*, 75, 367-385.
- Feeney, P. (1998). *Accountable aid: Local participation in major projects*. Oxford, UK: Oxfam GB.
- Fisher, W. F. (1997). Doing good? The politics and antipolitics of NGO practices. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 26, 439-464.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (1998). Habermas and Foucault: Thinkers for civil society? *The British Journal of Sociology*, 49(2), 210-233.
- Forsyth, T. (2005). Partnership. In T. Forsyth (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of international development* (pp. 506-511). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Foss, K. S. (2009). *Rhetorical criticism: Exploration and practice*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland.

- Foucault, M. (1983). Afterword: The subject and power. In H. L. Dreyfys & P. Rabinow (Eds.), *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics* (pp. 208-264). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Fox, C. (2002). Beyond the "tyranny of the real": Revisiting Burke's pentad as research method for professional communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 11(4), 365-388.
- Francis, P. (2001). Participatory development at the World Bank: The primacy of process. In B. Cook & U. Kothari (Eds.), *Participation: The new tyranny?* (pp. 72-87). New York, NY: Zed.
- Fraser, C., & Restrepo-Estrada, S. (1998). *Communicating for development: Human change for survival*. New York, NY: I.B. Tauris.
- Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Gadamer, H. G. (1975). *Truth and method*. New York, NY: Seabury Press.
- Gaillet, L. L. (2004). Writing program redesign: Learning from ethnographic inquiry, civic rhetoric, and the history of rhetorical education. In S. G. Brown & S. I. Dobrin (Eds.), *Ethnography unbound: From theory shock to critical praxis* (pp. 99-111). Albany, NY: State University of New York.
- Gandhi, M. K. (1962). *Village swaraj*. Ahmedabad, India: Navaivan.
- Garieis, E. (2010). Habermas to the rescue: Innovative assignment. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 73(2), 166-175.
- Gibson, W. J., & Brown, A. (2006). *Working with qualitative data*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Gill, P. (2010). *Famine and foreigners: Ethiopia since Live Aid*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Gnesh, S., Zoller, H., & Cheney, G. (2005). Transforming resistance, broadening our boundaries: Critical organizational communication meets globalization from below. *Communication Monographs*, 72(2), 169-191.
- Gopal, G. (1995). *Procurement and disbursement manual for projects with community participation*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.
- Gorzelsky, G. (2004). Shifting figures: Rhetorical ethnography. In S. G. Brown & S. I. Dobrin (Eds.), *Ethnography unbound: From theory shock to critical praxis* (pp. 73-97). Albany, NY: State University of New York.

- Gough, C., Kasmir, B., Jaeger, C., & Jaer, J. (2003). Citizen participation in sustainability assessments. In J. Jager, C. C. Jaeger, & M. T. Gardner (Eds.), *Public participation in sustainability science* (pp. 3-37). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Grimes, D. S., & Parker, P. S. (2009). Imagining organizational communication as a decolonizing project: In conversation with Broadfoot, Munshi, Mumby, and Stohl. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 22, 502-511.
- Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action (Vol. 1): Reason and rationalization of society*. (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Habermas, J. (1989). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An enquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. (T. Burger & F. Lawrence, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hailey, J. (2001). Beyond the formulaic: Process and practice in South Asian NGOs. In B. Cook & U. Kothari (Eds.), *Participation: The new tyranny?* (pp. 88-101). New York, NY: Zed.
- Hansen, M. H. (2005). *The tradition of ancient Greek democracy and its importance for modern democracy*. Copenhagen, Denmark: Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes.
- Hanson, R. L. (1985). *The democratic imagination in America: Conversations with our past*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Harrison, P., & Palmer, R. (1986). *New out of Africa: Biafra to Bandid*. London, UK: Robin Palmer & Worldvoice.
- Hasian, M. (2001). Rhetorical studies and the future of postcolonial theories and practices. *Rhetoric Review*, 20(1/2), 22-28.
- Hassen, M. (1990). *The Oromo of Ethiopia: A history 1570-1860*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Hauser, G. (1999). *Vernacular voices: The rhetoric of publics and public spheres*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.
- Heath, R. L. (2011). External organizational rhetoric: Bridging management and sociopolitical discourse. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 25, 415-436.
- Henkel, H., & Stirrat, R. (2001). Participation as spiritual duty; empowerment as secular subjection. In B. Cooke & U. Kothari (Eds.), *Participation: The new tyranny?* New York, NY: Zed.



- Hess, A. (2011). Critical-rhetorical ethnography: Rethinking the place and process of rhetoric. *Communication Studies*, 62, 127-152.
- Hettne, B. (1995). *Development theory and the three worlds: Towards an international political economy of development*. New York, NY: Longman.
- Hewitt, T. (2000). Half a century of development. In T. Allen & A. Thomas (Eds.), *Poverty and development into the 21st century* (pp. 289-309). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Hickey, S., & Mohan, G. (2004). *Participation: From tyranny to transformation? Exploring new approaches to participation in development*. New York, NY: Zed.
- Hilhorst, D. (2003). *The real world of NGOs: Discourses, diversity and development*. New York, NY: Zed.
- Hoffman, M. F., & Ford, D. J. (2010). *Organizational rhetoric: Situations and strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Jacobson, T. (2004). Participatory communication for development and the African philosophy debate. In O. Charles & E. Festus (Eds.), *Development and communication in Africa* (pp. 65-78). New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Jalata, A. (2001). *Fighting against the injustice of the state and globalization*. New York, NY: Palgrave.
- Johnson, R. L. (2006). *Gandhi's experiments with truth: Essential writings by and about Mahatma Gandhi*. Lanham, MD: Lexington.
- Kapoor, I. (2008). *The postcolonial politics of development*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kasemir, B, Jaeger, C., & Jager, J. (2003). Citizen participation in sustainability assessments. In J. Jager, C. C. Jaeger, & M. T. Gardner (Eds.), *Public participation in sustainability science* (pp. 3-36). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Kavoori, A. P. (1998). Getting past the latest "post": Assessing the term "post-colonial." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 15, 195-212.
- Khwaja, A.I. (2004). Is increasing community participation always a good thing? *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 2, 427-436.
- Kincaid, D. L., & Figueroa, M. E. (2009). Communication for participatory development: Dialogue, action and change. In L. R. Frey & K. N. Cissna (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of applied communication research* (pp. 506-532). New York, NY: Routledge.

- Koschmann, M. A. (2012). Developing a communicative theory of the nonprofit. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 26, 139-146.
- Krone, K. J. (2000). Becoming deeply multiperspectival: Commentary on finding common ground in organizational communication research. In S. R. Corman & M. S. Poole (Eds.), *Perspectives on organizational communication* (pp. 144-151). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Kulynych, J. J. (1997). Performing politics: Foucault, Habermas, and postmodern participation. *Polity*, 30, 315-346.
- Kumar, S. (2002). *Methods for community participation: A complete guide for practitioners*. London, UK: ITDG.
- Kuypers, J. A. (2005). The art of criticism. In J. A. Kuypers (Ed.), *The art of rhetorical criticism* (pp. 13-27). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Kuypers, J. A. (2009). What is rhetoric? In J. A. Kuypers (Ed.), *Rhetorical criticism: Perspectives in action* (pp. 1-12). Lanham, MD: Lexington.
- Lee, R. (2005). Ideographic criticism. In J. Kuypers (Ed.), *Rhetorical criticism: Perspectives in action* (pp. 305-344). Lanham, MD: Lexington.
- Legesse, A. (1973). *Gada: Three approaches to the study of African society*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Legesse, A. (2000). *Oromo Democracy: An indigenous African political system*. Asmara, Eritrea: Red Sea Press.
- Levine, D. N. (1974). *Greater Ethiopia: The evolution of a multiethnic society*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2002). *Qualitative communication research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Long, C. (2001). *Participation of the poor in development initiatives: Taking their rightful place*. Sterling, VA: Institute of Development Research.
- Lugar, R. G. (2006). Nongovernmental organizations and democracy promotion "Giving voice to the people: A report to members of the committee of foreign relations United States Senate." Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CPRT-109SPRT31506/html/CPRT-109SPRT31506.htm>
- Lynch, R. A. (2011). Foucault's theory of power. In D. Taylor (Ed.), *Michel Foucault: Key concepts* (pp. 13-26). Durham, NC: Acumen.

- Macedo, D. (2000). Introduction. In P. Friere, *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (pp. 11-28). New York, NY: Continuum.
- Madison, D.S. (2005). *Critical ethnography: Method, ethics, and performance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mafalopulos, P. (2008). *Development communication sourcebook: Broadening the boundaries of communication*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
- Mansuri, G., & Rao, V. (2003). Evaluating community-cased and community-driven development: A critical review of the evidence. Working paper, Development Research Group, World Bank.
- Mansuri, G., & Rao, V. (2013). *Localizing development: Does participation work?* Washington, D.C: The World Bank.
- Markakis, J. (2011). *Ethiopia: The two frontiers*. New York, NY: James Currey.
- Marten, K. (2002). Mission impossible? Defining nongovernmental organizations. *International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 13, 271-285.
- McCarthy, T. (1984). Translator's introduction. In J. Habermas, *The theory of communicative action (Vol. 1): Reason and rationalization of society*. (T. McCarthy, Trans.) (pp. v-xxxvii). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- McEwan, C. (2009). *Postcolonialism and development*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- McGee, M. C. (1980). The "ideograph": A link between rhetoric and ideology. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 66, 1-16.
- McKinnon, K. I. (2006). An orthodoxy of "the local": Post-colonialism, participation and professionalism in northern Thailand. *Geographical Journal*, 172, 22-34.
- McPhail, T. L. (2009). Introduction to development communication. In T.L. McPhail (Ed.), *Development communication: Reframing the role of the media* (pp. 1-20). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- McPhail, T. L. (2009). The major theories following modernization. In T.L. McPhail (Ed.), *Development communication: Reframing the role of the media* (pp. 21-48). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Megerssa, G. (1996). *Oromumma: Tradition, consciousness and identity*. In P.T.W. Baxter, A. Hultin, & A. Triulzi (Eds.), *Being and becoming Oromo: Historical and anthropological enquires* (pp. 92-102). Asmara, Eritrea: Red Sea Press.

- Meisenbach, R. J., & McMillan, J. J. (2006). Blurring the boundaries: Historical developments and future directions in organizational rhetoric. In C. S. Beck (Ed.), *Communication yearbook* (pp. 88-123). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Meisenbach, R. J., Remeke, R. V., Buzzanell, P. M., & Liu, M. (2008). "They allowed": Pentadic mapping of women's maternity leave discourse as organizational rhetoric. *Communication Monographs*, 75, 1-24.
- Middleton, M. K., Sendra-Cook, S., & Endres, D. (2011). Articulating rhetorical field methods: Challenges and tensions. *Western Journal of Communication*, 75, 386-406.
- Midgley, J. (2011). Community participation: History, concepts and controversies. In A. Cornwall (Ed.), *The participation reader* (pp. 172-181). New York, NY: Zed.
- Mohan, G. (2000). Beyond participation: Strategies for deeper empowerment. In B. Cooke & U. Kothari (Eds.), *Participation: The new tyranny?* (pp. 151-167). New York, NY: Zed.
- Mosse, D. (2003). The making and marketing of participatory development. In P. Quarles van Ufford & A. Giri (Eds.), *A moral critique of development: In search of global responsibilities* (pp. 43-75). London, UK: Routledge.
- Mumby, D. K., & Stohl, C. (1996). Disciplining organizational communication studies. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 10, 50-72.
- Myers, B. L. (2011). *Walking with the poor: Principles and practices of transformational development*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.
- Nelson, N., & Wright, S. (1995). *Power and participatory development: Theory and practice*. London, UK: ITDG.
- Newman, J. (1995). *The ballistic bard: Postcolonial fictions*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
- OECD. (1995). Introduction and summary. In H. Schneider & M. Libercier (Eds.), *Participatory development from advocacy to action* (pp. 9-14). Paris, France: OECD.
- Orvis, S. (2003). "Kenyan civil society: Bridging the urban rural divide?" *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41(2), 247-268.
- Oxfam International-Ethiopia. (2009, October 22). Band aid and beyond: Tackling disasters in Ethiopia 25 years after famine. Retrieved from <http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/band-aids-and-beyond>

- Pant, S. (2009). International development theories. In S. W. Littlejohn & K. A. Foss (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of communication theory* (pp. 541-545). London, UK: Sage.
- Papa, M. J., Singhal, A., & Papa, W. H. (2006). *Organizing for social change: A dialectic journey of theory and praxis*. New Delhi, India: Sage.
- Parks, W., Gray-Felder, D., Hunt, J., & Byrne, A. (2006). *Communication for social change anthology: Historical and contemporary readings*. South Orange, NJ: Communication for Social Change Consortium.
- Paul, S. (1987). *Community participation in development projects: The World Bank experience*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.
- Pieterse, C. (2006). Neoliberal globalization and the Washington consensus. In A. S. Huque & H. Zafarullah (Eds.), *International development governance* (pp. 91-104). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Piffero, E. (2009). *What happened to participation? Urban development and authoritarian upgrading in Cairo's informal neighbourhoods*. Bologna, Italy: I Libri di Emil.
- Prasad, A. (1997). The colonizing consciousness and representations of the other: A postcolonial critique of the discourse of oil. In P. Prasad, A.J. Mills, M. Elmes, & A. Prasad (Eds.), *Managing the organizational melting pot: Dilemmas of workplace diversity* (pp. 285-311). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Przeworski, A., Alvarez, M. E, Cheibub, J. A., & Limong, F. (1992). *Democracy and development: Political institutions and well-being in the world 1950-1990*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Putnam, L. L. (1983). The interpretive perspective: An alternative to functionalism. In L. Putnam & M. E. Pacanowsky (Eds.), *Communication and organizations: An interpretive approach* (pp. 31-54). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Rahmato, D., Bantirgu, A., & Endeshaw, Y. (2010). *CSOs/NGOs in Ethiopia: Partners in development and good governance*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: CSO Taskforce.
- Rich, R., & Newman, E. (2004). Introduction: Approaching democratization policy. In E. Newman & R. Rich (Eds.), *The UN role in promoting democracy: Between ideals and reality* (pp. 3-31). New York, NY: United Nations University.
- Richards, G. (1991). *The philosophy of Gandhi*. Richmond, UK: Curzon Press.
- Said, E. (1979). *Orientalism*. New York, NY: Vintage.
- Sealey-Morris G. (2009). "A cool drink of water before I die:" Four modern John Henry songs. *Southern Communication Journal*, 74, 406-421.

- Servaes, J. (1996). Introduction: Participatory communication and research in development settings. In J. Servaes, T. L. Jacobson & S. A. White (Eds.), *Participatory communication for social change* (pp. 13-25). New Delhi, India: Sage.
- Shome, R., & Hegde, R. S. (2001). Postcolonial approaches to communication: Charting the terrain, engaging the intersection. *Communication Theory*, 12, 249-270.
- Simmons, W.M. (2007). *Participation and power: Civic discourses in environmental policy decisions*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Stewart, J., & Philipsen, G. (1984). Communication as situated accomplishment: The cases of hermeneutics and ethnography. In B. Dervin & M. J. Voigt (Eds.), *Progress in communication sciences*, (Vol. 5) (pp. 177-217). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Stohl, C. (2005). Globalization theory. In S. May & D. Mumby (Eds.), *Engaging organizational communication theory and research: Multiple perspectives* (pp. 223-262). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Streeten, P. (1997). Nongovernmental organizations and development. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 554, 193-210.
- Suar, D., Hota, L. B., & Sinha, H. (2006). Non-governmental organisations in rural development. In M.C. Behera (Ed.), *Globalising rural development: Competing paradigms and emerging realities*. New Delhi, India: Sage.
- Ta'a, T. (1996). Traditional and modern cooperatives among the Oromo. In P.T.W. Baxter, A. Hultin, & A. Triulzi (Eds.), *Being and becoming Oromo: Historical and anthropological enquires* (pp. 202-211). Asmara, Eritrea: Red Sea Press.
- Taylor, D. (2011). Introduction: Power, freedom and subjectivity. In D. Taylor (Ed.), *Michel Foucault: Key concepts* (pp. 1-12). Durham, NC: Acumen.
- Tegegn, M. (2010). *Why Ethiopia remains poor: Structural and conjectural constraints for the emergence of civil society in Ethiopia, 1991-2005*. Saarbrücken, Germany: LAP Lambert.
- The World Bank. (1999). *Nongovernmental organizations in World Bank-supported projects*. Washington, D. C.: The World Bank.
- The World Bank. (1999). *The World Bank operational manual: The development grant policy*. Retrieved from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTOPMANUAL/Resources/EntireOpManualExternal.pdf?resourceurlname=EntireOpManualExternal.pdf>

- The World Bank. (2002). *Empowering the poor: Engaging civil society in World Bank operations*. Retrieved from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSCContentServer/WDSP/IB/2003/09/17/000090341\\_20030917133129/Rendered/PDF/267230English0En0Breve0no10120Empowering.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSCContentServer/WDSP/IB/2003/09/17/000090341_20030917133129/Rendered/PDF/267230English0En0Breve0no10120Empowering.pdf)
- The World Bank. (2013, January). Ethiopia overview. Retrieved from <http://hdrstats.undp.org/images/explanations/ETH.pdf>
- Thiong'o, G.W. (1996). *Decolonizing the mind: The politics of language in African literature*. Nairobi, Kenya: EAEP.
- Thomas, A. (2000). Poverty and the "end of development." In T. Allen & A. Thomas (Eds.), *Poverty and development into the 21st century* (pp. 3-22). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Thomas, B. (1980). The *Harambe* self-help experience in Kenya. *Rural Development Participation Review*, 1(3), 1-5.
- Townsend, R. M. (2004). *Deliberation and democracy: Ethnography of rhetoric in a New England town meeting*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
- UNDP. (2009). *Handbook on planning monitoring and evaluating for development results*. New York, NY: United Nations Development Program.
- UNDP. (2011, November 10). Human Development Report 2011: Ethiopia. Retrieved from <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ethiopia/overview>
- United States Senate. (2006). *Nongovernmental organizations and democracy promotion "Giving voice to the people: A report to members of the committee on foreign relations."* Retrieved from <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/index.html>
- Vedder, A. (2007). Questioning the legitimacy of non-governmental organizations. In A. Vedder (Ed.), *NGO involvement in international governance and policy* (pp. 1-20). Leiden, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Vestal, T. M. (1999). *Ethiopia: A post-cold war African state*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Vyas, H. M (1962). Preface. In M. K. Gandhi, *Village Swaraj* (pp. 5-15). Ahmedabad, India: Navaivan.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (1986). *Decolonizing the mind: The politics of language in African literature*. Nairobi, Kenya: East African educational.

- Walts, C. L. (2006). *Ideographs and the war on terror: A criticism of George W. Bush's post-9/11 discourses*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.
- Wander, P. (1983). The ideological turn in modern criticism. *Central States Speech Journal*, 34, 1-18.
- Wells, G. J., Shuey, R., & Keely, R. (2001). *Globalization*. Huntington, NY: Novinka.
- Werker, E., & Ahmed, F. Z. (2008). What do nongovernmental organizations do? *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 22(2), 73-92.
- White, S.A. (1999). Participation: Walk the talk. In S.A. White (Ed.), *The art of facilitating participation: Releasing the power of grassroots communication* (pp. 15-34). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Wills, K. (2005). *Theories and practical economic development*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- World Bank. (1996). *The World Bank participation sourcebook*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
- World Vision International. (2007). *Learning through evaluation with accountability and planning: World Vision's approach to design, monitoring and evaluation*. Washington, D.C: World Vision International.
- World Vision International. (2011). World Vision international accountability report 2011. Retrieved from World Vision official website: <http://www.wvi.org/our-accountability/publication/2011-accountability-report>
- Zarefsky, D. (2006). Interdisciplinary perspectives on rhetorical criticism: Reflections on rhetorical criticism. *Rhetoric Review*, 25, 383-387.



## APPENDIX

## Appendix A

Adult literacy program in one of the villages of the Oxfam working woreda



## Appendix B

Adult literacy program in one of the villages of Oxfam working woreda





## Appendix C

Executive members of Lelistu Self-help Association holding a meeting with Oxfam GB staff and a local government expert





## Appendix D

When the World Vision staff (right) was speaking, some participants appeared confused



## Appendix E

Local militia men attending community meetings, carrying their AK-47 machine guns



## Appendix F

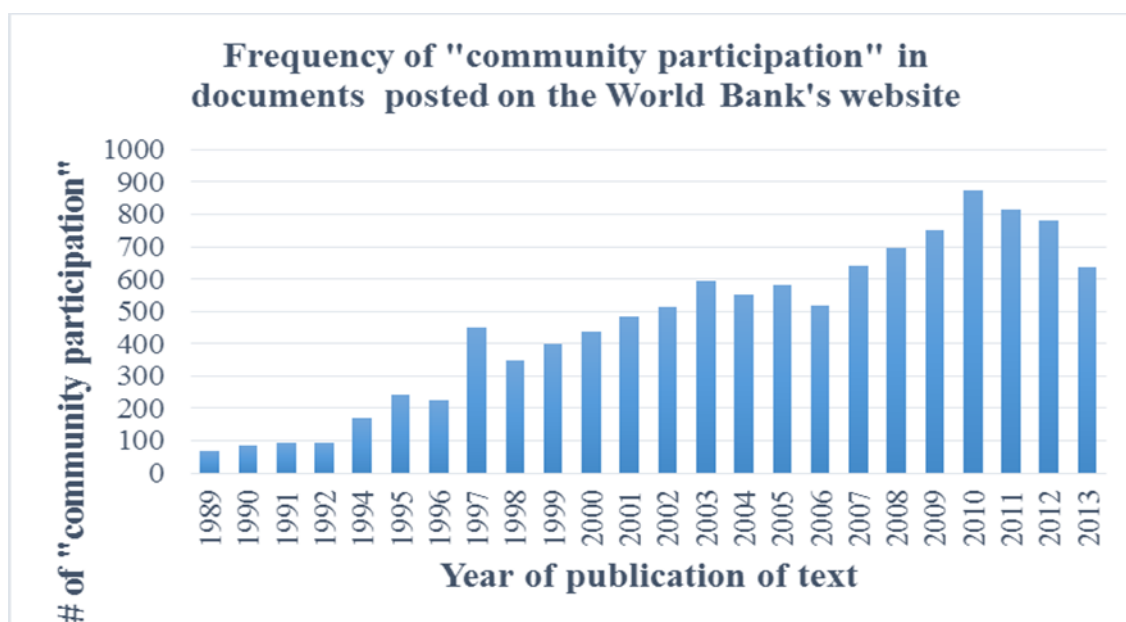


Chart generated on June 5, 2014 based on data from the World Bank Group's official website  
(NB: 2014 excluded)

1989	66
1990	86
1991	93
1992	93
1994	169
1995	244
1996	225
1997	449
1998	349
1999	397
2000	436
2001	483
2002	513
2003	594
2004	553
2005	580
2006	516
2007	641
2008	696
2009	751
2010	872
2011	814
2012	782
2013	638

**TOTAL 11040**



## Appendix G: IRB Documents



## Appendix B: Informed Consent Form



Department of Communication Studies

## University of Nebraska – Lincoln

**Informed Consent: The Rhetoric of Community Participation: The Role of Citizens and Experts in Deliberations over NGO-Initiated Projects in Ethiopia**

Researchers tell us the participation of community members in affairs that affect their lives is a fundamental aspect of grassroots development and serves as a check and balance mechanism. I am currently doing a research study to better understand the deliberative aspects of community participation in NGO projects.

The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. To be included in the study, you must meet the following criteria:

- 1) You must be at least 19 years old, and
- 2) You must be involved in the development interventions of either Oxfam or World Vision as a beneficiary, NGO worker or government partner.

If you do not meet the above criteria, you do not qualify for this particular study and should not proceed with the study.

If you meet the above criteria, you may take part in this interview that consists of two parts. In the first part I will ask you some background demographic questions about you, such as your age and your classification. In the second part I will ask you questions about your experiences with deliberations over NGO projects. (Note: Please do not include people's full names during the interview process.) The entire process will take approximately 60 minutes.

The information I obtain will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses will not be associated with you individually in any way and your name will not be tied to any of your answers. The only place your name will appear is on this consent form and all consent forms will be stored in a separate location from your responses in a secured office at UNL. In order for principal investigator to accurately retain all of the responses you provide in the interview, the interview will be recorded using a digital audio recording device, and the digital recordings will be stored on a password protected computer apart from the informed consent forms. I will transcribe these recordings and the transcriptions will be stored on a password protected computer apart from the informed consent forms. Your name and identity will not be linked in any way to any of the information you provide in the interview. The only individuals with access to your interview responses will be the researchers in this study. Results will be presented at an academic conference and possibly published in an academic journal; however, no identifying information will be included in the presentation of these results.



You should also know that at any time throughout the interview you are free to take a break, ask us to turn off the digital recorder, or refuse to answer any questions. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Your decision to withdraw from the study will not result in any loss of benefits you would otherwise be entitled to.

There are no direct benefits to you as a result of participating in this study except potentially gaining a greater understanding of grassroots deliberative processes and relationships between communities and development agents. In the event that you experience discomfort from participating in this study, please contact the health facility in your locality. It is your responsibility to pay for treatment if you choose to seek it out. The researcher will not be held liable for treatment expenses incurred.

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate or after the study is complete. If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me at 0911 43 80 67 (in Ethiopia) or (402) 570-5930 (in USA). If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the researcher or would like to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965.

If you meet the criteria and choose to continue participation, please read the entire informed consent and verify that you fulfill the participant criteria and agree to participate by signing and dating this form. Please return this informed consent form to me before starting your interview. If you do not fulfill the criteria or choose to not participate, please return the blank informed consent form to me.

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate, having read and understood the information presented. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with me or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Your decision to withdraw from the study will not result in any loss of benefits you would otherwise be entitled to.

Your signature also indicates that you are in fact at least 19 years old, and that you have involved in the development projects of either Oxfam or World Vision, either as a beneficiary, NGO worker or government partner. It also indicates that you understand and agree to be digitally recorded throughout the interview process, and know that you are free to ask me to turn off the tape recorder at any time during the interview.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Should you have any questions regarding your participation in this study, please feel free to contact any or all of the following people:

Sincerely,





Getachew Dinku Godana  
Doctoral Candidate, Department of Communication Studies  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 419 Oldfather Hall  
Lincoln, NE 68588-0329  
getdinku@yahoo.com  
(402) 570-5930

Ronald Lee, Ph.D.  
Professor, Department of Communication Studies  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 437 Oldfather Hall  
Lincoln, NE 68588-0329  
rlee1@unl.edu  
(402) 472-2255



አባሪ ለ፡ የፈቃደኝነት መግለጫ ፎርም



Department of Communication Studies

**ህብረተሰብ ተሳትፎ ዳክከር፡ መግቢያዊ ባልሆኑ ድርጅቶች የልማት ወይይት ላይ የዜጎችና የባለሞያዎች ድርሻ**

ህይወታቸውን በመጥለክቱ ጉዳዮች ላይ የዜጎች ተሳትፎ ወሳኝ የሆነ የልማት ግብዓት መሆኑን ተመራማሪዎች ይናገራሉ፡፡ በትክክል ከተሠራበት የህብረተሰብ ተሳትፎ አልሚ አካላትንም እንደመቆጣጠሪያ መሣሪያነት ያገለግላል፤ በዚህ ረገድ መግቢያዊ ባልሆኑ ድርጅቶች የልማት ፕሮጀክት ወስጥ የህብረተሰብ ተሳትፎ ያለውን ሥፍራ ለመገንዘብ ጥናት በሚረግ ላይ ነኝ፡፡

የዚህ ፅሁፍ ዓላማ ስለጥናቱ ተገንዝበው ለመስተፍ ይወዱ እንደሆነ በመሄጃ ላይ የተመሰረተ ወሳኔ እንዲያደርጉ ለመረዳት ነው፡፡ በጥናቱ ወስጥ ለመስተፍ የሚከተሉትን መስፈርቶች ማሟላት አለብዎት፡፡

1ኛ) እድሜዎ 19 እና ከዚህ በላይ መሆን አለበት

2ኛ) አክሲዮም ወይም ወርልድ ቪዥን ኢትዮጵያ ወስጥ በሚሄዱት የልማት ሥራ ላይ በመ.ያ.ድ ሠራተኝነት፣ በተጠቃሚነት ወይም በመግቢያ አጋርነት ድርሻ ያለዎት መሆን አለበት፡፡

ከላይ የተዘረዘሩትን መስፈርቶች የማሟላት ከሆነ በዚህ ጥናት ላይ ለመስተፍ ስለማይችሉ ቃለመጠይቁን ማቅረጥ ይችላሉ፡፡

መስፈርቱን የማሟላት ከሆነ ሁለት ዋና ዋና ክፍሎች ባሉት በዚህ ቃለመጠይቅ መስተፍ ይችላሉ፡፡ የመጀመሪያው ክፍል ስለ አጠቃላይ የማንነትዎ መግለጫ ማለትም ስለ ጾታ፣ ዕድሜ የመሳሰሉትን ይጠቁማል፡፡ የሁለተኛው ክፍል ጥያቄዎች ደግሞ አክሲዮም ወይም ወርልድ ቪዥን ከመካከላቸው ልማት ጋር በተያያዘ ሥለ ህብረተሰብ ተሳትፎ ያለዎትን ግንዛቤና ልምድ እጠይቃለሁ፡፡

አጥኚው ከእርስዎ የማገለግለውን ማንኛውም መረጃ በመስጠር የማይዝ ይሆናል፡፡ የሚሰጥዎት ምላሾች ከስምዎ ጋር አይያያዙም፡፡ ስምዎ የሚታይበት ብቸኛ ስፍራ በዚህ ፎርም ላይ ይሆናል፡፡ ይህ ፎርምም ምላሽዎ ከማቅመጡ በታ በተለየ ስፍራ ይቀመጣል፡፡ የሚሰጡትን ምላሾች በትክክል ለመያዝ ይቻላል ዘንድ ይህ ቃለመጠይቅ በቴፕ ይቀዳል፡፡ አሁንም ስለማንነትዎ የማይወቁት ሰዎች ሁለቱ አጥኚዎች ብቻ ሲሆኑ የዚህ ጥናት ወጠቱ በትምህርታዊ ዓወደጥናቶች ላይ የማቅረብና በትምህርታዊ መፅሐፎች ላይ የሚታዩት ይሆናል፡፡

ይህንን ገፅ እንብብው መጽሐፍን ለማግኘት ምልክት (ፊርማ) ያድርጉ፡፡



IRB# 20120712678EP  
Date Approved: 07/26/2012  
Valid Until: 07/25/2013

ቃለመጠይቁን በማንኛውም ሰዓት የማቅረብ፣ ቴፑን የማዘጋትና፣ ለመልሱ ያልወደዱትን ጥያቄ ያለመላስ መብትም የተጠበቀ ነው፡፡ በጥናቱ ላይ ላለመስተፍ በወሰኑ ይህ ወሳኔም የተከበረና በምንም ዓይነት ከአጥኚዎቹና ከነብራሳካ ሊንከን ዩኒቨርሲቲ ጋር ያለዎትን ግንኙነትም ይሁን ሊያገኙ ይችሉ የነበረውን ጥቅም የማይጎዳ መሆኑን እንዲረዱ እንወዳለን፡፡

በዚህ ጥናት ላይ በመስተፍም የበለጠ ግንዛቤ ከማግኘትም በቀር ሌላ በቀጥታ የማግኘት ጥቅም የለም፡፡ በጥናቱ ላይ በመስተፍም ምክንያት የጠፍ ችግር ቢጋጥም፤ በአካባቢው በሚካሄድ የጠፍ ተቋም የባለጥያ ዕገዛ እንዲያገኙ እንመክራለን፡፡ የህክምናውም ውጪ የሚከሰቱት እርስዎ መሆንዎን እገልጻለሁ፡፡ አጥኚው ለእንደዚህ ዓይነት ውጪዎች ኃላፊነት የማይወስድ ሲሆን ማንኛውንም የሚከፈልዎት መረጃዎች ምክንያት እንደምንጠበቅ አረጋግጣለሁ፡፡

በዚህ ጥናት ላይ ለመስተፍ ከመስማማትም በፊትም ይሁን ጥናቱ ካለቀ በኋላ ያለዎትን ማንኛውንም ጥያቄዎች አቅርበው ምላሽ የማግኘት መብት አለዎት፡፡ ጥያቄ ካለዎት ዋናው አጥኚ በስልክ ቁጥር 0911 438067፣ (402) 570 5930 ደወለው ይጠይቁ፡፡ አጥኚው ለመልስዎት ያልቻላቸውን ጥያቄዎች ወይም ቅሬታዎችን ለማቅረብ የነብራሳካ ሊንከን ዩኒቨርሲቲን ተቋማዊ የግምገማ ቦርድ በስልክ ቁጥር (402) 472 6965 በመደወል ማስገባር የሚችሉ መሆኑን እንገልጻለን፡፡

ይህንን የፈቃደኝነት መግለጫ ሰነድ ሁለት ቅጂዎች እስጥምታለሁ፤ መዝናኛዎቹን የማጽሔት ከሆነና በጥናቱ የመስተፍ ፈቃደኝነት ካለዎት ሰነዱን ባጠቃላይ እንዲያነበና እንዲፈርሙ ይጠየቃል፡፡ አንዱን ቅጂ ለእርስዎ በሚከተረው ሁለተኛው ቅጂ ለአጥኚው ይመልሱ፡፡ መስፈርቶችን የማጽሔት ከሆነ ወይም ላለመስተፍ ከወሰኑ ያልተፈረመባቸውን የሰነዱን ሁለቱንም ቅጂዎች ይመልሱ፡፡

በዚህ ጥናት ላይ ለመስተፍ ወይም ላለመስተፍ በፈቃድዎ ወሳኔ እያደረጉ ነው፡፡ ፈርማዎ አስፈላጊውን መረጃ ካነበበና ከተገነዘቡ በኋላ በጥናቱ መወሰንዎን ያረጋግጣል፡፡ ከአጥኚዎቹም ይሁን ከነብራሳካ ሊንከን ዩኒቨርሲቲ ጋር ያለዎትን ግንኙነት ሳይጎዳ በጥናቱ ላይ ላለመስተፍ የመላኩን መብትም የተጠበቀ ነው፡፡ ይህ ወሳኔም በምንም ዓይነት ሊያገኙ ይችሉ የነበረውን ማንኛውንም ጥቅም አያሳጥዎትም፡፡ ፈርማዎ እድሜዎ 19 እና ከዚህ በላይ መሆኑንና በአንድም ወይም በሌላ መልኩ አከስፋም ወይም ወርልድ ቪዥን ከሚሠሩባቸው የልማት ሥራዎች ጋር ቁርኝት እንዳሉት ያረጋግጣል፡፡

ፊርማ \_\_\_\_\_ ቀን \_\_\_\_\_

ከላይ በዚህ ሰነድ ወስጥ የተጠቀሰ በሆነም የምትጠው ቃለምግብ በቴፑ መቀዳቱን ተገንዝቤ የፈቀድኩኝ መሆኑን አረጋግጣለሁ፡፡ በማንኛውም በፈለግኩት ጊዜ አጥኚው ቴፑን እንዳይገባው መጠየቅ የምችል መሆኔንም እገንዝባለሁ፡፡

ፊርማ \_\_\_\_\_ ቀን \_\_\_\_\_

በዚህ ጥናት ላይ ለመስተፍም ጥያቄ ቢኖርዎት ከታች ሥሞቸው የተጠቀሰውን ሰዎች በአድራሻቸው መሠረት ማግኘትና ማስገባር የሚችሉ መሆኑን እንገልጻለን፡፡



ጌታቸው ድንቁ

ሥልክ 911-438067

Email getdinku@yahoo.com

ሮናልድ ሊ

ሥልክ 402 472 2255

email rleel@yahoo.com



**Fufata B: Ibsa Fedhii: Diskurii hirmanna hawaasaa**



Department of Communication Studies

Dhaabbilee miti-mootummaa ta'anitti marii misoomaa irratti Ga'ee Lammiiwwanii fi Ogeessotaa Dhimmoota jireenya isaanii ilaallatan irratti hirmanaan lammiiwwanii caala-guddistuu misoomaa murteessaa ta'uu isaa qoratonni ni dubbatu. yoo sirriitti itti hojjetame hirmanaan hawaasa qamolee misoomsaniif akka meesaa to'annooti isaan gargaara gama kanaan piroojektoota misoomaa Dhaabbilee miti-mootummaa keessatti hirmannaan iddoo inni qabu hubachuuf qu'annoo taasisaan jira.

Kaayyoon barreefama kanaa wa'ee qu'annicha hubatanii hirmannaa taasisuuf kan jaallatan ta'uu murtii oddeeffannoo irraatti hunda'e akka taasisan gargaaruufii dha. Qu'annicha keessatti hammatamuuf ulaagaalee kanatti aananii jiran guutuutu isiin irra jiraata.

**1<sup>ffaa</sup>**. Umuriin keessaan yoo xiqqate waggaa 19 ta'uu qaba.

**2<sup>ffaa</sup>**. 'Oxfam' fi 'World Vision Ethiopia' keessaa hojii misoomaa hojjetan keessatti hojjetaa miti-mootummaa ta'uun, fayyadamaa ta'uudhaan, miiltummaa hojii mootummaa keessatti ga'ee kan qabdan ta'uu qaba.

Yoo ulaagaalee ni guutu ta'e gaaffii fi deebii kutaalee lama kana keessatti hirmaachuu ni danda'u. Gaaffii fi deebiin kun kutaalee gurguddoo 2 (lama) qabaata. Kutaa duraa irratti gaaffilee ibsa eenyummaa irratti xiyyeeffatan isinan gaafadha. Gaaffii kutaa lammaffaa irratti immoo hojii



misoomaa ‘Oxfam’ ykn ‘World Vision’ geggeessaan walii wal qabataniif hirmaannaan hawwaasaa irratti hubannoo fi muuxannoo isin gaafachuun barbaada.

Qu’atichi odeeffannoo isin irra argate kamiin illee hiccitiidhaan kan qabu ta’a. Deebii keessan qabachuuf akka naaf mijatuuf jecha teeppiidhaan waraabama. Ammas qu’atoota lamaan wa’ee keessan beekan qofaatiin firii qu’annoo barnootaa irratti kan dhihaatuu fi barruu barnootaa irratti kan maxxanfamu ta’a.

Fuula kana dubbistanii xumuruu keessan agarsiisuuf mallattoo as irraatti taasisaa.

---

Gaaffii fi deebicha yeroo kamitti illee addaan kuttuu, teeppichaa chufuu fi deebii debisuuf isinitti hin tole deebisuu dhiisuuf mirgi keessan kan eegamee dha. Qu’annichaa irratti hirmannaa taasisuu dhiisuuf murtiin keessan kan kabajamee fi gosa kamiin illee waliitti dhufeenya isin Kanabiraaskaa Liinkan Yuniiversiitii waliin ta’e faayidaalee isin argachaa turtan kan hin mine ta’uu isaa akka hubatan nii jallanna.

**Qu’annoo kana irraatti hirmaachuu keessaniin:**

Qu’annoo kana irratti hirmaachuu keessaniif gumacha hawaasichi misooma irratti hirmannaa inni qabu ilaalchisee hubannoo argataniin alatti kallattiidhaan faayidaa argattan hin jiru. Sababa qu’annoo kanaa irratti hirmataniif rakkoon fayyaa yoo isin quunname dhaabbata fayyaa naannoo keessanitti argamu irra gargarsaa akka argataniif ni gorsina. Baasii ogeessa fayyaa sanas kan kaffalu isinii dha. Qu’atichi baasilee akkanaa kanaaf itti gaafatamummaa kan hin fudhanne yemmuu ta’u Odeeffannoo isin kennitan kamiin illee Hiccitiidhaan kan eegnu ta’uu keenya nii mirkaneessina.





Qu'annoo kana irratti hirmaachuuf utuu waliingalin dura ta'ees qu'annoon erga xumurameen booda gaaffii kamiin illee dhiheessitanii mirgi deebii argachuu qabdu. Gaaffii yoo qabattan Lakk. Bilbilaa 0911 43 80 67, (402) 570 5930 Bilbilaa gaafadhaa. Gaaffilee ykn komiilee dhiheessuuf bordiin madallii dhabbatawaa Kanabiraaskaa Liinkan Yuniiversiitiif Lakk. Bilbilaa (402) 472 6965 bilbiluudhaan hasofsiisuu kan dandeessan ta'uu ni ibsina.

Sanada lbsa fedhii kana waraabbii lamaan isiniif ni kennama. Ulaagalee kan guutan yoo ta'eef hirmanna taasisuuf fedhii yoo qabatan sanadicha guutummaa isaa akka dubbistaniif akka mallatesitaniif ni gaafatamtu. Waraabbii tokko isiniif hambisuuf waraabbii isa lammaffaa immoo qu'atichaaf deebisaafi. Ulaagalee kan hin guutne yoo ta'e immoo ykn hirmanna taasisuuf fedhii kan hin qabne yoo ta'e irratti hirmannaa taasisuu dhiisuuf yoo murteesitan waraabbii sanadichaa irratti hin mallatteefaniin lamanuu deebisa.

Qu'annoo kana irratti hirmannaa taasisuun ykn dhiisuun murti keessanii dha. Mallatichis odeeffannoo barbaachisaa erga dubbisanii fi erga hubataniin booda qu'annicha irratti murteessuu keessan mirkaneessa. qu'achiistota irraas ta'e Kanabiraaskaa Liinkan Yuniiversiitii waliin walitti dhufeenyaa isin qabdan utuu hin miidhin qo'annicha irratti hirmachuu dhiisuuf mirgi murteessuu keessanii kan eegamee dha. Murtiin keessan kun gosa kamiin illee fayida isin argachaa turtan kamiin illee isin hin dhabsiisu. Mallattoon keessan waggaa 19 fi isaa ol ta'uu keessan fi bifa biraatiin 'Oxfam' ykn 'World Vision' hojiilee misoomaa isaan kennan waliin walitti hidhannaa akka qabdan mirkaneessa.

Mallatto \_\_\_\_\_ Guyyaa \_\_\_\_\_



Armaan olitti sanada keessatti kan caqafame yoo ta'ee illee gaaffi fi deebiin nuti laanuu teeppiidhaan kan waraabamu ta'uu isaa hubadhe kakan eeyama ta'uu koo nan mirkaneessa. Yeroo barbadan kamitti illee qu'ataan teeppicha akka dhaabuuf kanan gaafachuu danda'u beekuu koo nan hubadha.

Mallatto \_\_\_\_\_ Guyyaa \_\_\_\_\_

Wa'ee qu'annoo kana keessatti hirmachuu keessaniif gaaffii yoo qabattan namoota maqaan isaanii armaan gaditti caqafame bu'uura teessoo isaaniitiin argachuu fi harofsiisuu kan dandeessan ta'uu isaa ni ibsina.

Geetaachewu Dinquu  
Bilbila 911043080 67  
I-Melii: [getdinku@yahoo.com](mailto:getdinku@yahoo.com)

Ronald Lii  
Bilbila 402 472 2255  
I-Melii: [rlee@yahoo.com](mailto:rlee@yahoo.com)

---

<sup>1</sup> P14: Getachew (Community member).docx - 14:1-4



አክሲዮም የሚባል ድርጅት ያወቁሉ? በምንድነው የሚያወቁት?

Answer:- በጣም አድርጌ ነው የማውቀው:: እየመጡ ያየና፤ አይዞህ ይሉናል፤ ወፍጮ አመጡልን፤ እኔ ባልቀበልም ዶሮም አምጥተውልናል:: ለወደፊት ደግሞ የቡና መሳሪያ ብዙ ጊዜ አመልክቻለው እንዲሰጡኝ አጠብቃለሁ፤ አክሲዮም እኛን ሊረዳ ብዙ ይፈልጋል::

Question:- በምን በምንድነው እስካሁን ሲረዳ የሚያወቁት?

Answer:- ቡና እየፈለፈለን በዳህና ዋጋ ሽጠናል፤ የቡና መፈፈያ ሰጥቶን ከበፊቱ በተሻለ ዋጋ እየሸጥን ነው ያለነው

Question:- የአክሲዮም ሰራተኞች እናንተን እየመጡ ያበረታቷቸዋል?

Answer:- አዎ በጣም ያናግሩናል:: በወር ውስጥ 7 ወይም 6 ጊዜ እየመጡ ያዩናል:: ነይማ የምትባለው 'እናት' ነች እየመመጣች ተግባብታ ታናግረናለች:: በጣም ጥሩ ነው::

<sup>2</sup> P19: Fikadu (Coffee Union Leader).docx - 19:1

Oxfam መቼ ነው ወደዚህ አካባቢ የመጣው እንዴት ከእናንተ ጋር መስራት ጀመረ? በፈረንጆች 2009 አካባቢ ነው በዛን ጊዜ ሊመጣ የቻለው ይሄ ዩኒየን በዛን ጊዜ ቡና እናመርታለን ሌሎችንም ምርጥ ዘሮች ለገበሬዎች እናቀርባለን ቡና ለሁለት አመት አካባቢ ወደ ማዕከላዊ ገበያ አቀረብን ይሄን መቅረቡ ገበሬውን ሊጠቅም አልቻለም ወደ አለም አቀፍ ገበያ መግባት የሚጠይቅ ሆኖ ስላገኘነው ካጠናነውም ነገር አንፃር ለምንን ለአለም ገበያ አናመጣውም ብለን አሰብን እና በአለም ገበያ ለማስተዋወቁ ደግሞ ከአቅማችን በላይ የሆነ Resource የሚጠይቅ ሆነ ከዛ Oxfam በዚህ ላይ ድጋፍ እንዲያደርግልን ጠየቅን በዚህ ምክንያት ነው ከ Oxfam ጋር ለመስራት የጀመርነው ቡና ላይ በተለይ አብረውን ይሰራሉ

<sup>3</sup> P23: Junedin (WV Community member).docx - 23:1

ለመጀመሪያ ጊዜ የዕህል ዕርዳታ ይሠጡ ነበር ምንም ለሌለው ደህ ሰው:- በሬ፤ ዶሮ፤ ይገዛሉ እናትና አባት ለሌላቸው ልጆች የተለያዩ ዕርዳታዎች ያደርጋሉ:- ለአንዳንድ ልጆች ብር ሰጥተው ከብት ያስገዙላቸዋል በመቀጠል ደግሞ ለቀበሌው ኮሚቴዎች ስልጠና ይሰጣል በአዋሽና በአዳማ አካባቢ ተጠርተው ኮሚቴው ደግሞ የወሰደውን ስልጠና በቀበሌ ሲሲ ለተባለው ኮሚቴ አባቶች፤ ከሴቶች ጉዳይ፤ የወጣቶች ተወካይ ከጤና ተወካይ፤ ከት/ት ተወካይ የሆኑ ሰዎችን በመጨመር/በማካተት/ እናትና አባት ለሌላቸው ልጆች ድጋፍ ያደርጋሉ እነኝህም ሰዎች የተለያዩ ተሞክሮ ያላቸው በመሆኑ ጥሩ ድጋፍ ያደርጋሉ:: ቢሆንም እነኝህ ወላጅ አልባ ህፃናት በተገቢው መልኩ እየተረዱ በጎ አድራጊ ድርጅቶች ይህንን አካባቢ ቢለቁ ህ/ተሰቡ ይንን ልምድ አድርጎ እንዲቀጥል ለማስቻል ስልጠናዎች በመስጠት ላይ ናቸው:: ለተቸገሩት ከችግራቸው አኳያ በርካታ ድጋፎች ተደርገዋል በጥቅሉ ት/ቤት እንኳን ለመጀመሪያ ጊዜ ያቋቋሙልን እነሱ ናቸው ይህ ት/ቤትም የነርሱ ስራ ውጤት ነው:: በመቀጠልም ይህንን ጤና ኬላም የሰሩልን እነርሱ ናቸው:: ችግረኛ ለሆኑት ሰዎች የሚያበረክቱት አስተዋፅኦ ይህ ነው የሚባል አይደለም::

<sup>4</sup> P30: Ababiya (Community member).docx - 30:4

መልስ:-የህብረተሰብተሳትፎላንተየሚሠጠውትርጉምምንድነው?ለምሳሌበልማትስራውስጥ

ጥያቄ:-

ማናቸውንምስራለምሳሌከቤተሰብብንሳክንድቤተሰብበጋራየሆነነገርካልሰራየተወሰነሰውብቻቢንቀሳቀስዋጋየለውምአ ካባቢንምብንወስድዕድር፤

ዕቁብየተለያዩነገሮችአሉእናእንዴትነውተሳትፎየሌሎውነገርውጤቱአናሳነውተሳትፎለአንድአገርዕድገትበጣምወሳኝነ ው::

ጥያቄ:- ተሳትፎስትልምንማለትነውበምንመልኩለምሳሌምንማድረግይችላልህብረተሰቡ?

መልስ:-ለምሳሌመንገድለመስራትይፈልጋሉአንድሰውብቻቢሰራያንንመንገድላይጨርሰውይችላልግንሁሉምሰውቢሳተፍ ያ መንገድየተፈለገውንግብላይደርሰህብረተሰቡምአገልግሎትሊሰጥይችላል

<sup>5</sup> P24: Junedin (WV Community member).docx - 24:1-2

እነርሱ በሚያበረክቱት አስተዋጽኦ ውስጥ እናንተ ምን ድርሻ ታበረክታላችሁ? በምን አይነት መልኩ ትሳተፋላችሁ?

እኛ በዕድሜ ደረሰን ትልልቅ ሰዎች በእረከን ስራ፤ እናርሳለን በጉልበታችን አስታዋፅኦ እና ደርጋለን።

በገንዘብስ አስተዋፅኦ አታበረክቱም?

ገንዘብ አልጠየቁንም።

በሀሳብሳ አግዛችኋቸው ታውቃላችሁ?

የሀሳብ /የአስተያየት/ ድጋፍ አላደረግንም። 1 ግዜ ውሃ ሲያሰገቡ አወያይተውን ነበር!

ስልጠና ስታመጡ ሀሳብ/ አስተያየት/ ትጠየቃላችሁ

ኑሮ እንዴት ነው? ሐገራችሁ እንዴት ነው ብለው ይጠይቁናል። ስለ ልማትም ያለውን ሁኔታ እንነግራቸዋለን።

እናንተ ባቀረባችሁት ጥያቄ መሠረት የሚፈቱላችሁ ችግር አለ?

እኛ ምን እንመክራለን እነርሱ እንዳሉት እነጂ

እናንተ ለምን አትመክሯቸውም?

ምን ይሁን ብለን! እነሱ የተማሩናቸው ጥያቄ እንጠይቃለን መለስ ይሰጡናል እኛም ስንጠይቅ እነርሱም መልስ ይሰጡና ከዚህ ባሻገር እንዲህ አርጉ ብለን ምን ብለን ነው የምንመክራቸው። እኛ ብንመክራቸውም መቼ ሀሳባችን ይቀበላሉ።

<sup>6</sup> P23: Junedin (WV Community member).docx - 23:3

ከቀበሌ ዕውቅና ውጭ ቢሆንም! ከ 1 ለ 5 በዘለለ ቡድን አለ ወደ 30 ሰዎች ያቀፈ ይህ እንደሰዎቹ የቤት ቅርርብ ይወሰናል ተግባራቸውም በአካባቢው በተፈጠረ ችግር ዙሪያ አዝያው ለራሱ መፍትሄ ይፈልጋል ነገሮቹ ወደላይ/ወደሌላ/ አካል እንዳያልፉ ጥረት ይደረጋል መፍትሔም ይገኝበታል። ይሄ የሰላሳ ሰዎች ቡድን በተፈጠረው ችግር ማወያየት የሚችሉ አካላት አሉት ፀሐፊም አለው፤ ጉዳዩ ከነርሱ አቅም በላይ ከሆነ ዞን የሚባል ደረጃ አለ በዝያ ይታያል ይህንን የሚያንቀሳቅሱ ከ 3 እስከ 4 ሰዎች አሉ ይቆጣጠሩታ አስቀምጠው ያወያያሉ። አሁንም ነገሩ ከከበደ ወደ ቀበሌ ስራ አስፈጻሚዎች ይሸጋገራል የቀበሌ ስራ አስፈጻሚዎች የተፃፈ መረጃ ከ 1 ለ 5 ጥምረት ጀምሮ ይደረሳቸዋል በዚህ መሠረት ማን መታረቅ እምቢ እንዳለ! የትኛው ግለሰብ ችግሩ እንዳይፈታ እንዳይረገ የመለየት ስራ ይሠራል በጥልቀትም ይታያል።

<sup>7</sup> P21: Hussien Gnarie (WV Community member).docx - 21:7

መንግስት ይሄን ይሄንን ስራ ሲል እናንተ የማትቀበሉት ከሆነ ይህንን መልሳችሁ ለመንግስት ታደርሳላችሁ?ከመንግስት የመጣ ነገር ከሆነ የሚያስተዳድረን በመሆኑ ለመተግበር እንጥራለን ነገር ግን ከአቅም በላይ የሆነ ነገር ካጋጠመን እንችልም እንላለን። ለምን አልተገቡራችሁም? እንዴት አልቻላችሁም ካለን? ለዚህ ለዚህ ምክንያቶች አልቻልንም እንላለን ዝም ብለን እንችለውም ማለት እንችልም የተወሰነውን ተቀብለን ሞክረን ነው ከዝያ ያቃተንን አንችልም እንላለን። ሙሉ በሙሉ አንችልም የመማለት መብት የለንም

<sup>8</sup>P38: Simret (Oxfam).docx - 38:9

የኔአይታትንሽለየትይላል NGOs በተወሰነደረጃበstaffingረገድእንዳልከው local የሆኑሰዎችንተጠቅመውከዛውጋር appropriate የሆነ staff selection ቢኖርበጣምተገቢነገርነውግንበሌላመልኩቁጥራቸውን technically የማድረጉሁኔታለምሳሌእኛበዚህበቡናፕሮጀክትውስጥ limited የሆነ resource ነበርየነበረንግንበዚ resource ምንአይነትነገሮችንመስራትአለብንእንዴትefficentመሆንእንችላለንእንዴት effective መሆንእንችላለንየሚለውንነገር assess ስታደርግ establish ያደረገውንነገርበደንብአብረኸውመስራትከቻልከለሚቀር potential ትተህታልፋለህግን technically ብዙ staff አዛብታላይአምጥተህከዛበኋላአንተስትወጣምንምነገርየማይቀርከሆነትንሽያስቸግራል። ተመሳሳይየሆነየትምሀርትፕሮግራምቤንሻንጉልላይነበርንእናአዛላይያደረግነውቢሮአሰሳላይነበርንፕሮጀክት officer project manager ነበረውግንታችወርደንበጣምበጣም remote የሆኑአካባቢዎችaccessableያልሆነታዎችነበር identify

የተደረጉት ስለዚህ Oxfam እዛቦታላይ 3 ወይም 4 staff ይዞአባን villages በሙሉ መድረስ አይችልም፤ በርስላዚህ ያደረግነው ከታችኛው villages level እዛው ህብረተሰቡ ውስጥ ወላጆች እራሳቸው የት/ቤቱ ማሳደግ፤ የት/ቤቱ leaders እንዲሆኑት/ቤቱ ውስጥ ደግሞ ልጆቹ ከቤብ በማቋቋም እካባቢያቸውን የሚያፀዱ፤ ዛፎችን የሚተክሉ ወዘተ እንዲያደርጉ አደረግን እና የ NGO sector ለውጥ ላምጣካለ staff ማብዛት መፍትሄ አይሆንም የ grass root level capacity ማሳደግ ነው የሚሻለው።

<sup>9</sup>P46: Tilahun (World Vision).docx - 46:10

አንተ እንደ ወርሃዊ ሺዥን ሠራተኝነት ህያን ተቀረቢታ ከየትኛው ጋር ነው?  
ከ ወርሃዊ ሺዥን ያለ ህገገር ያመዝናል ወይስ እራሱ ከንከህብረተሰቡ ጋር ታጣምራለህ?  
በኔ አመኔታ ወርሃዊ ሺዥን እራሱ የህብረተሰብ ነው። ስለዚህ ህብረተሰቡ መሆን አለበት ወይም መድረስ አለበት ወይ ተባለው ሀሳብ ላለጥብ ሎ መጣ እንጂ እራሱን የቻለ መታወቂያ አለው ብዬ አላስብም። ስለዚህ ወርሃዊ ሺዥን የማህበረሰቡ አካል ነው ብዬ ነው እማስበው። እኔ እራሴን ምክከህ ላይ ቆይታለሁም። የህብረተሰቡ አካል ነኝ ብዬ ነው እማስበው። የወርሃዊ ሺዥን ሃሳብ ሙሉ በሙሉ የህብረተሰቡ፤ የፓርትነር ስህህተት ነው። ለምን?  
ይህ ደሰራ በሎ አልመጣም። ምንድነው ችግራችሁ ምን ይሰራ በሎ የህብረተሰቡን ሀሳብ ይዞ ነው የተነሳው። ስለዚህ የህብረተሰቡ አካል ነው ብዬ ነው የምልህ

<sup>10</sup>P13: Zerihun (World Vision).docx - 13:5

ህብረተሠቡ በተለያዩ ድርጅቶች ተደራጅቷል በመንግስት በባህላዊ ማህበራት። ማንኛውም የወርሃዊ ሺዥን staff ወደ ህብረተሰብ በሚገኝበት ጊዜ ስራዎቹ የሚሆኑት አንዚህ partners ብለን በተለያዩ ደረጃዎች የተቀረጹ ቡድኖችና ችግሮች የሚያስተባብሩ አካላት አሉ ከነርሱ ጋር ወይም ይታይ ይደረጋል በነሱ አማካኝነት ወደ ህብረተሠቡ ቡድን ይሰጣሉ። ከዚህም ውጪ በአለት ተላለፈው አቸው ውስጥ ህብረተሠቡን ስለሚያገኙ ያንን ያውቁታል።

<sup>11</sup> P38: Simret.docx - 38:4

በኔ እምነት ህብረተሰብ የሚለው ነገር የችግሩም የእድገቱም ባለቤት የሆነው ሰው ነው። በዚህ ረገድ ህብረተሰቡን ማሳተፍ ማለት በራሱ እድገት ላይ እራሱ ውሳኔ ሰጪ እራሱ የሚፈልገውን ነገር አቅራቢ እራሱ እድገቱ መሰረት ጣይ መሆን አለበት ብዬ ነው የማስበው ownership ሊኖር ይገባል የራሱን ህይወት manage, lead, own የሚያደርገው ከሆነ የምናደርጋቸው ነገሮች ሄደው ሄደው አይወድቁም የባለቤትነት ስሜት ስለሚኖር ማለት ነው ስለዚህ ተጠቃሚ አድርገን በተለያዩ ፕሮጀክቶች ውስጥ የምንወስዳቸው ህብረተሰቦች የባለቤትነት ስሜት የሚሰማቸው መሆን አለባቸው እና እኔ ተሳትፎ የሚለውን ነገር የምመለከተው እንዲሁ nominal የሆነ በፕሮጀክት ቀረቶ ወቅት የሚደረጉ አንዳንድ መረጃ ለመሰብሰብ የሚጠቅሙ ነገሮች ሳይሆን ህብረተሰቡ ምን አይነት ለመሰብሰብ የሚጠቅሙ ነገሮች ሳይሆን ህብረተሰቡ ምን አይነት ፍላጎት አለው እንዴት ሊሰራው ይፈልጋል ለምን ሊሰራው ይፈልጋል ምን አይነት ለውጥ በህይወቱ እንዲመጣለት ይፈልጋል የሚሉትን ነገሮች በሙሉ ዳሶ ከራሱ የሚመነጨውን ነገር ወደ እድገት ለማድረስ የሚደረግ ግንዛቤ ነው ብዬ ነው የማስበው ስለዚህ እንደዚህ ነው የምረዳው ብዙ ጊዜ sustainability impact የሚሉት ነገሮች ፕሮጀክቱ በሚፈለው ገንዘብ ልክ አይደለም የሚለካው ህብረተሰቡ እራሱ እንዴት አድርጎ ያንን ነገር ለውጥ አድርጎታል እንዴት አድርጎ manage አድርጎታል የሚለውን ነገር እና በመጨረሻ ማንም መጣ በሚወጣበት ጊዜ ያንን ነገር በቀጣይነት የማድረግ ሁኔታ ነው ብዬ ነው የማስበው እና የሚፈልገውን ነገር identify ከማድረግ ጀምሮ መጨረሻ ላይ እራሱ own ማድረግን የሚጨምር ነው ብዬ አስባለሁ።

<sup>12</sup> P46: Tilahun (World Vision expert)

የህብረተሰቡ ተሳትፎ በጣም ሰፊ ነው በራሱ ልማት ነው እና የህብረተሰቡ ተሳትፎ ማለት ህዝቡ በተቋማት የሚሰሩትን ስራዎች የኔ ነው ብሎ የራሱ እንዲያደርጋቸው የሚሰራ ስራ ነው። ስለዚህ ይህ የህብረተሰቡ ተሳትፎ ታርጌት ግሩፑ በሃሳብ ሊሆን ይችላል፤ በቁልቁስ ሊሆን ይችላል፤ የልማቱ ተሳታፊ ሆኖ ልማቱን የራሱ እንዲያደርገው ማድረግ ነው ብዬ አስባለሁ። ለወርሃዊ ሺዥን ብቻ ሳይሆን ለሁሉም መንግስታዊ ያልሆኑ ድርጅቶች፤ ልማት ሰራተኞች ሊሆን ይችላል። የህብረተሰቡ ተሳትፎ የሌለበት ስራ ዘላቂ ነው ብዬ አላምንም። ስለዚህ በምንም ሁኔታ ህብረተሰቡ ወይም ታርጌት ግሩፑ የተሳተፈበት ልማት አዋጭ ወይም ዘላቂ ነው ብዬ አስባለሁ። ሌላ ነገር ከመሰራቱ በፊት ህብረተሰቡን ከአቅድ ጀምሮ፤ ንድፍ ሀሳቦችን ከመስጠት ጀምሮ፤ የሰራው ተሳታፊ ከማድረግ ጀምሮ፤ ስራውን ከመገምገም ጀምሮ መጨረሻ ላይ ኢቫሎዌት እስከማድረግ ድረስ በኋላ ደግሞ ስራውን እስኪረካከቡ ድረስ ማሳተፍ በራሱ ልማት ነው ብዬ አስባለሁ።

<sup>13</sup> P 1: Anteneh (WVE expert).docx - 1:12

commutity participation እንደ concept ሁሉም የተርዱ ቢመስልም ተግባር ላይ ሲመጣ facilitate በሚደረጉበት ጊዜ የኮንሰፕቱ መረዳት የተለያ አንደሆነ ታላህ አንዳንዶች ህብረተሰቡን ለስብሰባ ስለጠሩ ተሰትፎ አለ ይላሉ ህብረተሰቡን ምን እንዲሰሩ መጨረሻ ላይ ሄደው ሲነግሩት ተሳትፎ አለ ይባላል

እንዲሰማን እንናገራለን ተሳትፎ የሚለውን ነገር ሰማን ከዛ እናወራለን ማው መሳተፍ ያለበት ባለቤት ያሳትፋል ተሳታፊ ማለት ብዙ ጉዳይህ አይደለም ግን ገቃደኛ ሆኑና የተወሰነ ነገርህን commit አደረክ ማለት ነው ባለቤቱ እራሱ ነው የራሱን ኑሮ የሚኖረው ተሳታፊው በመጨረሻውም ሰአት ምሳ ሲበላ ሲሆን ያጠበም ሊሆን ይችላል ህብረተሰቡን ተሳታፊ ካልነው ማነው ባለቤት ስለዚህ NGO ከዚህ ጀምሮ ነው አስተሳሰቡን መቀየር ያለበት የተሳታፊ demand መምጣት ያለበት ከማህበረሰቡ ነው። ህብረተሰቡ ተጨማሪ skill demand እንዲያደርግ የሚቀሰቅስ team መጀመሪያ ሊኖር ይገባል። ቀድሞ ሄዶ የህብረተሰቡን ፍላጎት መክፈት አለባቸው ከዛ ህብረተሰቡ አድርጎ መንግስትንና ሌሎችን ኑ ይሄን ሰሩ ተሳትፋ ብሎ ማለት እስከመድረስ መቻል አለበት።

<sup>14</sup> P46: Tilahun (WVE). Docx- 46:15

በግሌ የገጠር ልጅ ነኝ። ቤተሰቦቼ አርሶአደሮች ናቸው። ብዙ ልምድ አይቻለው፤ ያለ ህብረተሰብ ተሳትፎ የተሰሩ ስራዎች ሳይሳኩ ሲቀሩ አይቻሉም፤ ስለዚህ የህብረተሰብ ተሳትፎ ሲጀመር ልታደርግልኝ ያሰብኩውን አማክረህ ስታደርግልኝ እና ሳታማክረኝ ስትሰራ ይለያያል። ስለዚህ የሚደረግልኝን ነገር የምወደው ግንኙነታችን አስተማማኝ እንዲሆን የምታደርግልኝ ነገር ውጤታማ እንዲሆን ካስፈለገ የኔ ተሳትፎ ግዴታ ነው።

<sup>15</sup> P 1: Anteneh (WVE).docx - 1:5

ወደ 1986 ይወስደናል ያኔ ነው community based technical program ተብሎ የተጀመረው እና የተወሰኑ facilitators ተወስደው ለ6 ወር ስልጠና የወሰዱበት ጊዜ ላይ ነው የህብረተሰብ participation need ጉልቶ የወጣው ያኔ rehabilitation and development transition ስለነበር የተገዳውን አሳትፎ መሄድ አስፈላጊ ነበር cost effective በሆነ መንገድ sustain የሚደርግ ስራ ለመስራት ተብሎ ነው የተጀመረ ነው then ይሄ ጅማሬ በወቅቱ በደርጅቱና በህብረተሰቡ ዘንድ ተቀባይነት ቢኖረውም ሌሎች actors በዛ practice ውስጥ ስላልገቡ እንደ ጊዜ ማባከን cost effective እንዳልሆነ በማህበረሰቡም በኩል እንዲህ አይነት image ነበረው በኋላ እየታየ ሲመጣ አንደኛ globally appreciate መደረግ ጀመረ፤ politically እንደ ጥሩ ነገር መታየት ጀመሩ ቀስ በቀስ እንደ ኖርም እየተቆጠረ መጣ።

<sup>16</sup> P 1: Anteneh (WVE).docx - 1:3

ሁሉም ይሄን ይፈልጉታል ምክንያቱም ብዙ የልማት ስራዎች sustain ማድረግ አልቻሉም እንዲያውም እንዳንደ እንዳይቀጥል የሚያስቸግሩና የሚያጠፉት ማህበረሰቡ ነው። ምክንያቱም አንደኛ ለምን እንደሆነ አያውቁም ሁለተኛ external ሰዎች ስራ የሚሰሩት ከ existing values, norms, individual and society needs በተቃራኒ መልኩ ነው ስለዚህ ህብረተሰቡ እራሱ ያጠፋዋል።

<sup>17</sup> P13: Zerihun (WVE) .docx - 13:2

NGO ሌሎችም Civil Organizations ቆይታቸው ለተወሰነ ጊዜ ነው ዋናው እዛ አካባቢ ሆኖ በዘለቄታነት ልማቱን ሊያስኬድ የሚችለው በዋናነት ህብረተሠቡ ነው ስለዚህ ይህ ህብረተሠብ ከሌሎች አካላት በሚደረግለት ድጋፍ ብቻ ህይወቱን ወይም ትውልዱን ያስቀጥላል ማለት አይቻልም ስለዚህ ተሳትፎ እንዲደረግ ቢፈለግም ልማቱ ወደፊት መቀጠል ስላለበት ነው ይሄ እንደኛ የልማቱን ስራ በትንሽ ወጪ እንድናከናውነው ይረዳናል ሁለተኛ አስተዳደሩን እራሱ ስለሚይዘው ነገሮች በተቀላጠፈ መልኩ ሊካሄዱ ይችላሉ ሦስተኛ ሌሎች አካላት ያንን ስራ ሠርተው በሚለቁበት ጊዜ እነሱ ይዘውት የመጡትን ልማት በቀጣነት ህብረተሠቡ ይዞት ይሄዳል በነዚህና በሌሎች ምክንያቶች የህብረተሠብ ሚና መጎልበት ስላለበት ለዛ ነው በማናቸውም ስራዎች የህብረተሠብ ተሳትፎ ተፈላጊ የሆነው።

<sup>18</sup> P48: Solomon (Oxfam). docx - 48:3

ሀገርውስጥ ያንንስራ የሚያስፈፅሙ መንግስታዊ ያልሆኑ ድርጅቶችን በማወቅም ይሁን ባለማወቅ አጠቃላይ ፅንሰ ሀሳብ የተለየ ከ መንሻ በተለይ የነበረውን የህብረተሰቡን ተሳትፎና ፅንሰ ሀሳብ በመሰረት በሚፃረር መልኩ ስራዎችን ሊሠሩ ይችላሉ። ሁለት ነገሮችን እንደም ሳሌልሰጥህ እችላለሁ።

እኔ የሰራሁ ባቸው ድርጅቶች ለምሳሌ ወርልድ ቪዥን ስሠራ በነበረበት ጊዜ by large እኛ ያሰብነው ሀሳብ፤ እኛ ያቀድነው እቅድ ህብረተሠቡ indorse እንዲያደርግ የመፈለግ ነገር ነበር። እዛ ከ10 አመት ቢፊት ስሠራ የዛ ጊዜ እኛ እና ቅዳላን እኛ እና ዘጋጃለን እኛ assessment እንሠራ ለንያን ከህዝቡ indorse እንዲያደርግ እና ደርግና የህዝቡ ሀሳብ እንደሆነ አድርገን ለdonors የምናቀርብበት ሁኔታ አለ።

<sup>19</sup> P48: Fasil Abate.docx - 48:3

ውሳኝንበሆኑየፖለቲካጉዳዮችላይአራሱሙብቱንclaim::እናከመንሻውእስከመድረሻውድረስdownየሚያድርጊትfollowupየሚያደርጉትየእቃግዢየሚያከናውኑትከመንግስትጋርተውያይተውቦታየሚያስፈቅዱትእነዛሆነበረተሰብክፍሎችናቸው::ለለዚህ community participationየተወሰነየደርግከላይእስከታችድረስፍፁምየሆነህሣብንከመንግሥትእስከመጨረሻድረስህብረተሰብብፍጹምበላለቤትንትስሜትownአድርጎትይሠራል::ከዳርሆኖከልምድእጦችናከግንዛቤእጥረትበመነጨየሚፈጠሩክፍተቶችንበህሳብየመደገፍናውሳኝንበሆኑነገሮችላይየፋይናንስድጋፍበማድረግብቻነውaction aidየራሱንተሳሳትፎየሚገድብው::

<sup>20</sup> P38: Simret (Oxfam staff) .docx - 38:10

በOxfam የintervention ስራዎች ላይ promote የምናደርገው አንዱ ነገር እንዲህ የመሳሉ dialogs እና forums establish እንዲያደርጉ ማድረግ ነው በወረዳ፣ በዘን፣ በክልል forums establish ማድረግ፣ ማርኬት ግሩፕስ መፍጠር እና አንዳንዱ ጊዜ ህብረተሰቡ ውስጥ ውይይት ስታደርግ ትልቁ ነገር በvalue chain ነገር ውስጥ ከታች ጀምሮ መፈቱን ከመቆፈር ጀምሮ ሁሉም ነገር ውስጥ ሴቶች አሉበት በጣም significant number ነው ያላቸው ግን የሚጠቀሙት ትንሽ ነው በዚህ ጉዳይ ላይ ውይይቶች ሲኖሩ የተለያዩ ፍላጎቶች መጥተው ነበር አንዳንዶቹ በዚህ ነገር ውስጥ መስራቱን አላመኑበትም ነበር በኋላ ግን እራሳቸው more saving culture ላይ መደራጀታቸውን አምነውበት ከዛ በኋላ save እንዲያደርጉ በተወሰነ መጠን አብሮ የመሰባሰብ የመወያየት ነገር revolve እንዲያደርግ አደረግነው። ከዛ የተለያዩ opportunities እንደ አሳየናቸው፡ የfacilitation role እየተጫወትከ more open up እንዲያደርጉ፣ እንዲወያዩ ባደረክ ቁጥር ወደ ትክክለኛው track ይመጣሉ።

<sup>21</sup> P35: Shemsiya (Oxfam staff) docx - 35:2

በዚህም መሠረት የህብተሰብ ተሳትፎ ስንል እንደ community አብሮን እየሰራ ያለው ዩኒየን ነው። ዩኒየኑ ስር ደግሞ ሌሎች primary representatives አሉ። ከፖሊሲ ቀረፃ ጀምሮ እስከ monitoring ድረስ እነዚህን አካላት ያሳትፋል። ፕሮጀክት ቀረፃዎች በሚካሄዱበት ጊዜ back donors፣ donor፣ implementer organization እና የሱ representatives አሉ። የፕሮጀክቱ ስራ በሚሰራበት ጊዜ ስራው ላይ ይሰማራሉ፣ monitoring ላይ ይሳተፋሉ እና በተወሰነ መልኩ አሳታፊ ነው። በዩኒየኑም የማስገባው።

<sup>22</sup> P13: Zerihun (World Vision) .docx - 13:7

ተሣትፎ በሁሉም ፕሮጀክት ሳይክል ውስጥ ነው እቅድ ከማውጣት ጀምሮ እስከ መጨረሻ ፕሮጀክት ተዘግቶ እስከማወጣት ድረስ የህብረተሰብ ተሣትፎ አንዳኖር ጋይድ ላየች ይዛል በዚ መሠረት ነው እየተሠራ ያለው

በእቅድ አወጣጥ ላይ ምንም ነገር ከህብረተሰቡ ፍላጎት ውጪ የሆነ ነገር ፕሮግራሙ ላይ አይካተትም የማፈልገት ነገር ብዙ ሊሆን ይችላል ከዛ ውስጥ እራሳቸው ቅደም ተከተል አውጥተው እንዴት መደረግ እንዳለበት ለይተው እንዲያወጡ ይደረግና ፕሮግራሙ ተቀርቦ የወጣል አንዳንዱ ደረጃ ላይ ህብረተሠቡ እንዲሳተፍ ይደረጋል የ information በየጊዜው ቅብብል ይደረጋል በህብረተሠቡ የታቀዱ ነገሮች ተግባራዊ እንዲሆኑ ከእነርሱ ጋር ቁጭ ብለን እንገመግማለን። evaluation ላይ ፕሮጀክቶቻችን ሁለት ጊዜ ለግምገማ ቀርባለ። አንደኛው በግማሽ ጊዜ ላይ ሁለተኛው ደግሞ ፕሮጀክቱ ሲያልቅ ከህብረተሰቡ ጋር አብረን ሆነን እንገመግማለን ሌላ ደግሞ የአምስት አመት እቅድ እናወጣለን።

<sup>23</sup> P45: Abreham (World Vision ).docx - 45:15

አሁን ባለን ADP context ስትመጣ እስከ 5% የሚያዋጣቸው ነገሮች አሉ ለምሳሌ በአምስት አመት ውስጥ ሁለተኛ ደረጃ ትምህርት ቤቶች እናስራለን ብለው ካሰብነው ውስጥ ከ5-7% የአርሱ ድርሻ ነው። የውሃ ስራዎችን ስትሰራ የጉልበት ስራዎችን የመስራት ነገር አለ። ግን ቸግሮች አሉ። የራሱ የህብረተሰብ ባህሪ እራሱ አስቸጋሪ ነው ማለትም የትጋት፣ አለመደራጀት፣ ያንን እንዲያደርጉ የሚያደርገው በወረዳ ደረጃ ያለው ባለሞያ ሄዶ ነው የሚሰራው የራሴ ነው ብለው እንዲሳተፉ እራሳቸው ናቸው በሰጠህቸው ቅርጽ መሰረት መስራት የነበረባቸው ስለዚህ መሻሻል ይገባል ማለት ነው። ግን ለማዋጣት ፍላጎቱ አላቸው ይሳተፋሉም።

<sup>24</sup> P 1: Anteneh (World Vision).docx - 1:11

በሁለቱ ማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት አለ Resource ይፈለጋል ፈጣን ልማት ይፈለጋል ፈጣኑ ግን ቀጣይ እንዲሆን ማድረግ አስቸጋሪ ነው አልቻለም ምክንያቱም ቀጣይ ልማት ማለት society ያንን ነገር ለመረዳት ምን ያህል ይፈጅበታል የሚወሰደውን የመረዳት ነገር ነው አንዳንዴ አስር አመት ይፈጃል አንዳንዴ አምስት አመት ይፈጅበታል የወሰድነው ነገር ላይ ግርታ ሊኖራቸው ይችላል ይሄም ልክ ነው ምክንያቱም የለመዱትን ትተው አዲስ ያመጣንላቸውን ነገር ተቀበሉ ስንላቸው ይከብዳቸዋል ስለዚህ በጥቂት በጀት society ውስጥ ገብቶ ቀስ በቀስ ማስተማር ይቻላል።

<sup>25</sup> P28: Wondwosen (World Vision).docx - 28:7

በዚህ የልማት ባለቤት መንግስት በሆነበት በመዎች ድጋፍ ነው የሚያደርጉት ተጨማሪ እጅ ሆነው ነው ለመንግስት የሚያገለግሉት ስለዚህ ባለቤት ሆኖ እነዚህን አጠገቡ ያሉትን አጋሮች በደንብ ሊጠቀሙባቸው በሚችሉ መንገድ ከያዘዋቸው የተሻለ ነገር ማምጣት ይቻላል ብዬ አስባለሁ ግን ብዙ ጊዜ በኛ ሀገር ያለው ልምድ መንግስት የፖለቲካ ኢንተረሰቱን ቅድሚያ ይሰጣል የልማት ነገሩ የፖለቲካውን ትኩሳት ተከትሎ ነው የሚሄደው በዚህ ሰአት የወጣው የNGO ዎች ህግ ከበፊቱ በተለየ የNGO ዎችን እንቅስቃሴ በቁጥጥር ስር ለማስገባት በጣም እየተሞከረና እየተሰራበትም ያለ ነው እና ሁልጊዜ መንግስት የሚከተለውን የፖለቲካ ኢሹ ሊታገል የሚችልበት የልማት አካሄድም ቢሆን ያንን የሚገታበት ከሆነ ብዙ ትኩረት አይሰጠውም በአንድም በሌላም የቆመዋል። ስለዚህ እንደዚህ አይነት ችግሮች አሉ።

<sup>26</sup> P46: Tilahun (World Vision).docx - 46:6

ያ እንዳይፈጠር ከወረዳ ጋር ትልቅ ውል አለን እና ከኛ ኮሚቴ ወረከረ ልጆች ይልቅ የመንግስት የልማት ጣቢያ ሰራተኞች የጤና ሰራተኞች በቁጥርም ይበልጣሉ። እኛ አንድ የልማት ሰራተኛ ነው ያለን እነሱ 3 የልማት ጣቢያ ሰራተኞች አላቸው። አንዱ አግሮኖማ፣አንዱ ተፈጥሮ ሀብት፣ አንዱ እንስሳት ሀብት ተብለው። ጤና ኤክስቴንሽንም 2 ወይም 3 ነው ያላቸው። ስለዚህ ከኛ ይልቅ ሀብረተሰቡን በማወቅ ረገድ የመንግስት ሰራተኞች ይበልጡናል። በቁጥርም በሀብረተሰብ ሽፋንም እነሱ ሰፊ ያለ ሽፋን ስላላቸው ወደድንም ጠላንም እነሱን ሳንይዝ ብቻችንን ምንም ማድረግ አንችልም። ያን ውይይት ግን በቢሮ ደረጃ ፅንሰ ሀሳቡም ማስጨበጥ ምናልባት በርከት ያለ ሀሳብ ሊመጣ ይችላል ወይም ደግሞ እንደዚህ አይነት ዘላቂ ሀሳብ ሊነሳ ይችላል። ትልቁ ስራ መጀመሪያ የሚሰራው በቢሮ ነው። በቀበሌ ደረጃም በወረዳ ደረጃም። ስለዚህ ምንም አይነት ስራ ስንሰራ የመስክ ሰራተኛ አለን ብለን በነፃነት እኛም ደፍረን አንገርጥም። መጀመሪያ ከወረዳ ጋር ውይይት ጨርሰን ግብርናን ወክለው ወይም ጤናን ወክለው በቀበሌ ደረጃ ወይም የኛም ሰራተኞች ስላሉ የናጉተ ልጆች ከኛ ጋር እንዲሰሩ አደራ የሚል ነገር በደንብ ተወያይተን ነው የምንነሳው።

<sup>27</sup> P 9: Tolosa (Local gov't Official).docx - 9:1

Oxfamበወረዳችንባለውየልማትእንቅስቃሴውስጥእንደአንድየልማትአጋርሆኖአየሰራነው።ብዙአስዋፅዎምአድርጎልናል።በተለይ ስራአጥንበመቀነስ፣በመንግስትየተጀመሩየልማትስራዎችንበማስቀጠልትርጉምያላቸውንእንቅስቃሴዎችአድርጓል።ለምሳሌደራሕ ሲቃንቀበሌዎች-በናይበተለይበሴቶችተራሪመሠረትትምህርትእንዲሰጣቸውእንዲሀምበአካባቢያቸውያሉትግሮችእንዴትመፍ ታትእንደሚችሉከአካባቢያቸውሁኔታበመነሳትአያሰለጠነናአየሰራይገኛል።

<sup>28</sup> P25: Teshome (Govenment expert).docx - 25:1

ወርልድቪዥንበዙስራዎችይሰራል (በ community Development) ከኛጋርበተያየዘየሚሰራቸውስራዎችበገበሬተሳትፎየሚሰሩስራዎችላይነውለምሳሌ (በwaterharvesting)ውሃማቆርስራይሰራልበተለይአካባቢውየዝናብእጥረትያለበትአካባቢእንደመሆኑመጠንይህንንለማገዝበው ሃማቆርስራላይበጣምይሳተፋልበውሃማቆርሚሰሩገበሬዎችደግሞበአትክልትናፍራፍሬልማትላይእንዲሳተፋያበረታታል፤ድጋፍይ ሰጣልበተጨማሪበwater pampsያቀርባልይህንንደግሞበጋራበመሆንእናስራጫለንከዚህበተጨማሪትፊሊንግእንሰጣለን።

<sup>29</sup> P44: Beyene (Govenment expert).docx - 44:21

መልስ:ወርልድቪዥንን ከ1998 ዓ:ምጀምሮነውየማውቀውከዛምእስከ 2000 ዓ.ምአብረንሰርተናል።

ጥያቄ: እርስዎሲገነዘቡትወርልድቪዥንምንዓይነትድርጅትነውምንምንዓይነትስራዎችንነውየሚሰራው?

መልስ:ወርልድቪዥንእርዳታሰጪድርጅትነውበዚህበአዳማአካባቢከሚሰራባቸውስራዎችየመጀመሪያውቤተሰቦቻቸውደካማየሆኑ ህፃናትንስፖንስርማፈላለግነው።በአካባቢውየልማትስራዎችንየካሂዳሉበግብርናዘርፍበጤናው፣በተ/ትበአብዛናውበእነዚህዘር ፍነው።በግብርናውዘርፍበተለይእኔንበሚመለከተውበእንስሳትዘርፍከሌላውበተለይእዚህየእንስሳትጤናችግርትልቁችግርስለነበረ አገልግሎትመስጫተቋማትችግርአለ።እነኚህእኔበነበርኩበትለምሳሌወደ 4

የሚሆኑክሊኒኮችነውጠርውስትየሠራነው፡፡ቀደምሲልየነበሩየወርልድቪዥንድርጅቶች 3 አሉሰባትበመንግስትደግሞ 3 ተሰርተውወደ 10

የሚጠጉክሊኒኮችእዚህአሉ፡፡ከነዚህውስጥበወርልድቪዥንነውየተገነቡትከእነዚህውስጥችግርያለባቸውንበታዎችቢያንስለሶትቀበሌየሚሆንአማካይበታዎችንእየመረጥንአስፈላጊነገሮችንአሟልቶበመንግስትበኩልደግሞሠራኛበመመደብበዚህዓነትነውእንሳተፍ የነበረው፡፡ለእንስሳቱዘርፍብቻምሳይሆንበዓዝ ትልማቱምበተለይይሄአካባቢበተለይወርልድቪዥንሊቀሳቀስባቸውየነበሩትወደ 11 የሚጠጉቀበሌዎችናቸውእነኚህ 11 ቀበሌዎችደግሞለረጅምጊዜ በችግርላይየነበሩናቸው፡፡በድርቅየሚጠቁናቸውችግሩስርየሰደደነውእስከአሁንምያለተላቀቁአሉ፡፡ለእነሱእንግዲህእርዳታምይሠጣልበተጨማሪምመልስየማቋቋሙየሚሰራው፡፡ዘርማቅረብሰምንለማቋቋምላሞችንእስተናመሳራያዎችንየመሥጠትዕነኚህተግባራትነበሩበዕነኚህአካባቢዎችላይሲከናወኑየነበሩት፡፡በኃላነውሌሎችቀበሌዎችየተጨመሩየመጡትምከንያቱምበዙ NGO's ስላሉእነሱይዘውየነበሩትእነዚህንነው፡፡

<sup>30</sup>P 3: Hassen (Government official).docx - 3:2

አዋጁከወጣባቸውምከንያቶችአንዱየልማትናየዲሞክራታይዜሽንስራላይቶታል፡፡በፊትይሄንንየሚለይህማልነበረምይህህግሲወጣአላማውንበግልጽአስቀምጧል፡፡የልማትስራማለትለምሳሌችግርበሚደርስበትጊዜ (ኃርፍ፣የተፈጥሮአደጋ...) በቻነበሩትከረትየሚሰጣቸውአሁንግንከዛበተጨማሪለምሳሌትምህርትበማስፋፋት፣ጤናበማስፋፋትየመሰረተልማትበማስፋፋትወዘተ...

እነዚህንነገሮችበሚሰሩድርጅቶችላይሙሉበሙሉገደብአልተቀመጠምሁሉንምመስራትይችላሉ፡፡ይህንመስራትየሚችሉትግንበሐግማአቀፍውስጥሆነውከየትኛውምከውጭሀብትምንጭሀብትበማሰባሰብይሰራሉእነዚህየልማትስራዎችየምንላቸውናቸው፡፡ነገር ግንከዚህበተጨማሪደግሞገንዘብናአደረጃጀትንየለየበትአንዱምከንያቶችገንዘብተጠሪነትንየሚያስከትልስለሆነከውጪበሚገኝገንዘብደግሞየዲሞክራታይዜሽንስራላይ፣የሰብአዊመብትስራላይ፣መስራትአይቻልም፡፡የአሰብአዊመብትናየዲሞክራታይዜሽንስራላይህብረተሰብስራነው፡፡የህዝቡነው፡፡ከህዝብሊመንጭየሚችልመሆንአለበትስለዚህሀገሪቷካላትሀብትበማስተሳሰርናበማስተላለፍበሰብአዊመብትናየዲሞክራታይዜሽንስራላይሰራይችላል፡፡ከውጪየሚመጣሀብትከሆነግንዘርዘርያንንተቀብሎየሚሰራውአካልፊፖርትየማድረግግዴታይጠበቅበታል፡፡ያንንየሚያደርግከሆነዘርዘርተጠሪነቱአገለግለዋለውለሚለውሀብረተሰብሳይሆንገንዘቡንለስጠው አካልነው፡፡ያአካልደግሞየሚሰጠውንማንኛውምተልዕኮየማስፈጸምግዴታይኖርበታል፡፡ስለዚህከዚህከሀገራዊሉአላዊነትከሚባለውነገርላለመውጣትእናእሱንለማስጠበቅሲባልየሚሰሩየዲሞክራታይዜሽንስራዎችበሀገርሀብትመሰራትአለባቸውበሎላይቶታል፡፡ስለዚህአዋጁእንደወጣድሮሁሉንምአቀላቅሎይሰሩየነበሩድርጅቶችእራሳቸውንመለየትጀመሩ፡፡ግማሾቹእዚህሀብትበቀላላማሰባሰብአይቻልምብለውስለሚያስቡበዲሞክራታይዜሽንስራዎችላይበአብዛኛውሲሰሩየነበሩድርጅቶችተቀይረውወደልማትየመጡበትሁኔታአለ፡፡ያንንስታደርግግንየልማትስራብቻነውየምትሰራውሌለውደግሞከሀገርውስጥሀብትእናሰባሰባለንቀድሞየጀመርነውንየዲሞክራታይዜሽንየለውሀብትስራትንቀጥላለንብለውበዚህየቀጠሉአሉ፡፡

<sup>31</sup> P21: Kedir (WV Community member).docx - 21:8

ወርልድ ቪዥን ያለው ችግር፡- ፎቶ ይዘው እንዳንድ ልጆችን እድሜአችሁ አልደረሰም ብለው የፈለጉትን ይወስዳሉ ያልፈለጉትን ደግሞ ይተዋሉ፡፡ የእ/ር አፈጣጠር እንኳን ይበላለጣል አይደል በጣም የተቸገረውን መርጠን ስናቀርብ አይሆንም ይሉናል፡፡ በቂ ምክንያት አይሰጡንም የሚፈልጉትን ወስደው የሚፈልጉትን ይተዋሉ የሚረዱትን ልጆች በተመለከተ፡፡ ሁሉንም ነገር ቆይ፣ ቆይ፣ ቆይ፣ ይሉናል እንጂ ለይተው አያስረዱንም ለምን ስንል አልደረሰም ቆይ ይሉናል ፎታቸውን የወሰዱት ልጆች ቢኖሩም ያ ፎታቸውን ውጭ የወሰደው ግለሰብ ነው የሚወስድበት/ባት ይሉናል እኛ ደግሞ እውነት ይመስለናል እንቀበላለን፡፡ ይህንንም የሚከለክሉ ሰዎች አሉ አቅም የሌላቸውን ችግረኛ ሰዎችን ቢለዩ ጥሩ ነበር ግን አይለዩም

<sup>32</sup> P36: Sebokka (WV Community member).docx - 36:7

መንግስት የልማት ሀሳብ ብሎ ከላይ የሚያወርድው ሀሳብ አለ የአካባቢው ሀብረተሰብ አይ ይህ ለኛ አይጠቅምም እኛ እናውቃለን እዚህ ስለኖርን 25ም 50ም 30ም አመት ስለኖርን የበለጠ እናውቃለንና ይህን አንቀበልም ብሎ ማለት ይችላል

አይ በርግጥ ይወያይበታል መቸም መንግስት የማይጠቅም ነገር ይጠቅማል አይልም የማይሆን ነገር ደግሞ የተማረ ስለሆነ የሚጠቀመውንና የማይጠቅመውን ያውቃል ያልተማረም ቢሆን ሀብረተሰቡ ያውቃል የማይሆን ከሆነ ደግሞ እምቢ አልቀበልም ይላል እንዴት ይሆናል፡፡

ልምዱ አለ ግን?

ልምዱ የለም ግን አይመጣምም መንግስት እንዲህ አያመጣም ቢያመጣ እንኳ ይህ እንዲህ ነው እንዲህ ነው ብሎ በደንብ አስረድቶ ህብረተሰቡም ጉብዮት ይቀበላል።

<sup>33</sup> P19: Fikadu (Coffee Union Leader).docx - 19:6

እንደ NGO Exvalue ካደረገው ስራዎች እንዲሰሩ የሚፈልጉት ሁኔታ አለ እኛም ደግሞ የምንፈልገው ነገር አለ። እንደ እኔ ያየሁት አብዛኛው የእኛ interest ነው የነሱ ነው ስንልም ለምሳሌ ሴቶች ላይ በጣም መስራት ይፈልጋሉ እና ስራዎች ሲሰሩ ሴቶችን እንድናሳትፍ የነሱ ፍላጎት አለ። ያ ማለት ግን የነሱ interest ብቻ ሳይሆን የኛም ሀሳብ አለበት ስለዚህ ሳይከብድን እንሰራለን። የኛ ማህበር የራሱ የሆነ መመሪያ አለው በዛ ነው የምንንቀሳቀሰው ስለዚህ እኛ በአመታዊ ዕቅዳችን ባወጣነው ነው እነሱ የሚገቡት ከዛ ወጪ ከሆነ ከአመታዊ እቅድ ውጭ ከሆነ አንቀበልም።

<sup>34</sup> P25: Teshome (Govenment expert).docx - 25:17

አንዳንድ ጊዜ ስብሰባ ስናደርግ ብዙ ጊዜ ስልጠናና ውይይት ላይ የምናደርገው ለምሳሌ የህብረተሰብ ተሳትፎ የሚፈልጉ ጉዳዮች ላይ ወይም ደግሞ ወደፊት ሊሰሩ የሚፈልጓቸው ጉዳዮች ላይ እቅድ ለመንደፍ አንዳንድ ነገር ስንወያይ ብዙ ጊዜ የምንመራው እኛ ነን። ይህን እቅድ የምናስፈጽመው ማለት ነው ነገር ግን አንዳንድ ጊዜ ስራዎች እንሰጣቸዋለን ለምሳሌ ሰው መርጣችሁ ላኩ ስንል እራሱ መርጦ የሚልከበት ሁኔታ አለ እኛ ሳንገባበት ማለት ነው። ተወያይቶ መርጦ እነ እክሌ ይሁኑ ብሎ ከነ ምክንያቱ ያመጣል። እና እንደ አጀንዳው እና እንደምንፈልገው ነገር ይወሰናል። እቅድ ለማቀድ ከሆነ እኛ ነን የምንረዳቸው ለምሳሌ ተጠቃሚ ለመምረጥ (beneficiary select) ምረጡ 30 ሰው በዚህ ዓመት በዚህ ነገር ላይ እንዲሳተፍና ተጠቃሚ እንዲሆን ምረጡና ላኩ ብለን ብንላቸው ቁጭ ብለው መርጠው ማንን ለምን እንደመረጡ ዘርዝረው ያመጣሉ።

<sup>35</sup> P 1: Anteneh (World Vision).docx - 1:9

ህብረተሰቡ እውቀት አላቸው እነሱ ምንድነው የሌላቸው ያንን ከፍተኛ ለመሙላት ነው innovation ይዘን መምጣት ያለብን ስለዚህ ህብረተሰቡን ማወቅ የመጀመሪያው መሆን አለበት ለምሳሌ አንድ ጊዜ ከሺሺች ADP ወደ ዱራሚ ADP ስሄድ እዛ አካባቢ አትክልት መብላት አልተለመደም እና አህያ ላይ ጐመን ተጭኖ አየሁ እና ገበሬውን አቁሜ ጠየኩ የት እንደሆነ ከዛ ነገረኝና በሚቀጥለው ቀን ሄድኩ ስሄድ የሆኑ ሰዎች የሆኑት ወንዝ በጭራሮ ቆፍረው አምጥተው ሲለማመዱ አየሁ እና ይበላሉ ስለዚህ ምንድነው የምትፈልጉት አልኳቸው እነሱም ይሄን መብላት እንችላለን ግን አንዳንዴ ይቺ ውሀ ታልቃለች አሉ እኛ ምን አደረግን ያቺን ምንጭ ስፕሪንግን cut አደረግናት ከዛ ዘር እንዴት እንደሚገኝ ነገርናቸው ከዛ ከተማው በጥቅል ጎመን ተጥለቀለቀ። ነገር ግን ሌላ ቦታ ሄደን ካርት ይዘን ሄደን ምንጭ ለመቆፈር በቃን የጠየቀን ግን አራት እጥፍ ፕረት ነበር ስለዚህ ሁለቱን እውቀት ለማጣመር አንዱ አንዱን የሚዳፈን ነገር ይኖራል።

<sup>36</sup> P28: Wondwosen (World Vision).docx - 28:10

እኔ በሁለት መንገድ አየዋለሁ ከሶስት አራት አመት በፊት ያለው እንደ አንድ ከዛ በኋላ ያለውን ደግሞ እንደሁለተኛ አየዋለሁ። የመጀመሪያው ሙሉ ለሙሉ ከላይ ወደታተ የሆነ አሰራር ነበር። የባለሞያው ሃሳቦች ብቻ ናቸው ህብረተሰቡ ውስጥ ገብተው ህብረተሰቡ እርሱ በፈለገው መንገድ ሳይሆን ባለሞያው በፈለገው መንገድ የማድረግ ነገር ከፍት ነበር ህብረተሰብ ብዙም ዕድል አልነበረውም የህብረተሰብ ተሳትፎ ሳይሆን የህብረተሰብ ማጊፕሌሽን ብንለው ይገልፀዋል። ለሌላ በኩል ደግሞ በሁለተኛው መንገድ ምንም እንኳን ፖሊሲው ወደ መሬት ወርዶ ተግባር ላይ የሚያውለው አካል ካለመኖሩ የተነሳ እንደተፈለው ባይሆንም ግን ከዛ ወዲህ ያለው የሽግግር ሰአተ ብለው አሁን ያልካቸውን የህብረተሰብ እውቀት ተቀብለው በዛላም እየበለጠ እያስተባበርን ሀገር በቀል ዕውቀቶቹ የሚያመጡን ነገር ተግባራዊ ለማድረግ የመሞከር ነገሬች አሉ። በመመሪያው ደረጃ እነዚህን አውጥቶ የመነጋገር ነገሮች አሉ ግን መተግበር ላይ ትንሽ ይቃረናል ምክንያቱም ልምድ ከልጃም ይሰባል እንደሚባለው ባለሙያው እዛ ላይ ከአስተሳሰብ ጋር የያያዙ ስራዎች በጣም መሰረት አለባቸው ብዬ አምናለሁ እንደዚህ አይነት ነገሮች ቴንሽን ፈጥረው ታያለህ አንዳንድ ቦታ ሲጓዙ ታያለህ አንዳንዱ ቦታ ሲላተሙ ታያለህ አንዳንዱ ቦታ ተለያይተው ያምበራሱ ይሄም በራሱ ሲሄድ ታያለህ ግን የየትኛውን ሚዛን ጠብቄ መሄድ አለብኝ ከተባለ ወጥ የሆነ በጥናት ላይ የመሰረተ ነገር ያስፈልጋል ብዬ አስባለሁ ያሊደረግ ይገባል ብዬ አስባለሁ ስለዚህ ለብዙ ፕሮግራሞች መውደቅ እንደችግር ብዬ እኔ የማየው እዚህ ላይ ያሉ ችግሮች ያመፈታቸው ነገር ነው።